

"So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote . . . the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being."

Indira Gandhi

**Selected
works of
Jawaharlal
Nehru**



5 MARCH 1951

Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Second Series

Volume Sixteen

Part I

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General Editor

S. Gopal

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interest in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively

and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit, that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

Indira Gandhi.

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

The four months covered in Part I of this volume, from 1 March to 30 June 1951, saw in foreign affairs an intensification of the Korean crisis and efforts by the United States to persuade other countries to sign a peace treaty with Japan on the lines of its own draft. The independent attitude of Nehru's Government on both issues offended opinion in the United States, and this was reflected in the reluctance to despatch foodgrains to India without restrictions to meet near-famine conditions, and in a refusal to appreciate India's viewpoint on Kashmir.

At home Nehru's main problem was differences with the President of the Congress, Purushottamdas Tandon. The proclaimed intent of several senior Congressmen to leave the party forced Nehru's hand and obliged him to bring matters to a head.

Nehru's correspondence with the President, Rajendra Prasad, on the inauguration of the Somnath temple shows his clear understanding of, and deep commitment to, secularism.

The Nehru Memorial Library has been good enough to grant access to the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru and other relevant collections. Shrimati Indira Gandhi made available to us documents in her possession and these papers are categorized as the JN Collection. The Secretariats of the President and the Prime Minister, the Ministries of Home Affairs and External Affairs, the National Archives of India and the Press Information Bureau have allowed us to utilize material in their possession. Some portions of classified material have had to be deleted. Nehru's remarks in his interviews with Norman Cousins, and published as *Talks with Nehru* (New York, 1951), have been included in full.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AICC	All India Congress Committee
AINEC	All India Newspaper Editors' Conference
AIR	All India Radio
CARE	Cooperative for American Remittances to Everywhere
C&F	Cost and freight
CIF	Cost, insurance and freight
ECA	Economic Cooperation Administration
FOB	Free on Board
GO	Government Order
HMG	His Majesty's Government
ICS	Indian Civil Service
KMT	Kuomintang
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
NAI	National Archives of India
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
PCC	Provincial Congress Committee
PIB	Press Information Bureau
PMS	Prime Minister's Secretariat
PTI	Press Trust of India
RAF	Royal Air Force
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
TASS	Soviet News Agency
UK	United Kingdom
UNO/UN	United Nations Organisation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNCIP	United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
UP	Uttar Pradesh
UPCC	Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPS	Ministry of Works, Production and Supply

BUILDING THE NATION**I. Economic Policy**

1. Taxation on Income¹

The honourable Member who has just spoken has dealt with certain wider questions, which appear to me to go beyond the scope of the present Bill, which is a short Bill before the House.²

The House will remember that when this Commission was appointed³ they were entrusted with two tasks. One was to examine the whole income-tax procedure and suggest ways and means to avoid or prevent evasion in future. Secondly, they were to examine specific cases which were referred to them. What the honourable Member has been saying really refers to the first part, that is the wider question. As has been stated, I believe, in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, we have received from the Income Tax Investigation Commission recommendations on this wider issue and they will no doubt come up before the House in the form of a measure and the House will then have full opportunities of considering them, adding to them or altering them, so that we might evolve a proper procedure. The sole question before the House now is what to do with the enquiry part of the Commission's work, with regard to certain cases that were referred to them.

Now I would beg the House to remember that this is not a roving enquiry. This enquiry has been confined to a certain number of specific cases referred to them upto a certain date: no further cases can come up before them. Apart from that, a fair number of all the cases that have been referred to them has been disposed of and a large number still remains and this Bill is limited to those particular cases and none other. It does not affect the larger issue and obviously the larger issue cannot be considered in the form of amendments to this particular Bill, which is meant to give an opportunity to the Commission of Enquiry to complete its task in those specific cases which have been entrusted to it.

This matter would normally, of course, have been dealt with by my honourable colleague, the Finance Minister.⁴ Unfortunately he is not here but I should like to inform the House that next only to the Finance Minister I have taken a great deal of interest in the work of this Commission—more

1. Statement in Parliament, 9 March 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol IX, Part II, columns 4179–4183.
2. K.T. Shah thought that the list in the Report of ways of concealing income or evading tax was not exhaustive. He wished all the outlets for fraud to be closed and arrangements made to give an incentive to those who helped the exchequer in securing its dues.
3. The Income Tax Investigation Commission was appointed towards the end of 1947. It started work in 1948 and submitted its report on the existing law of income-tax towards the end of 1948. The report was published in 1949.
4. C.D. Deshmukh.

perhaps than any other of my colleagues. Of course the Finance Minister will be better able to deal with it as he knows most about it. But I have also been fairly closely connected with the matter in the sense that I have attached great importance to this work and I have occasionally had talks with the members of the Commission to find out how they were getting on. May I say that the criticism that has been made, I think yesterday, by an honourable Member about the rather sorry result of their labours appears to me totally unjustified?⁵ I feel their labours have resulted in very substantial and very good results. They have laboured under great difficulties—the various methods and ways of delaying, obstructing, evading the giving of information—and in spite of that they have proceeded calmly and steadily with their work in the highest judicial traditions. And the House will remember that the Chairman⁶ of this Commission is one Judge of India. We attached great importance to the fact that a Commission of this kind must have men of the highest ability and integrity, and we were fortunate in finding such a man in Mr Varadachari. Anything entrusted to a Judge of that high standing with his life-long experience of the Bench is bound to be carried out in a judicial manner. The House can be sure of that. In fact, possibly, if delays have occurred, as they have, partly they are due to the fact that the Commission and the Chairman are anxious to preserve every type of judicial procedure and not to do anything which might even give any suspicion of hurrying through and not giving that opportunity which should be given. If the House could see the decisions that they have given—I do not know what they are called, not judgements—they are tremendously long—seventy, eighty or a hundred pages. They have carefully given every opportunity and have come to certain decisions. Most of these decisions also, I would like the House to remember, are ultimately by consent. Now, the difficulty in dealing with such matters through, let us say, the Income Tax Department which is the normal way of dealing with them, has been that they cannot deal with them both judicially and at the same time informally. They have to be formal, their rules govern them, and the people concerned do not like that particular process—they do not welcome it, they do not go there easily unless they are compelled by law to go there. They do come, at least relatively with this reluctance, to this Enquiry Commission because the Enquiry Commission can deal with them informally, can come to terms with them, on almost any terms that they consider just and proper, which the Income Tax Department cannot easily do always. So, that the procedure this Income Tax Investigation Commission has adopted was far more helpful than the normal

5. Thakur Das Bhargava had stated that the country's system of income-tax had been prostituted to an unrecognisable extent and the arbitrary powers of officers led to dishonesty. In his view, if the Commission had not been in existence much more would have been secured by way of taxation.
6. Srinivasa Varadachari.

procedure, would have been helpful from any point of view, certainly from the State point of view but also from the point of view of the other people concerned whose cases were being enquired into. When an enquiry is made it is not exactly an agreeable thing for the person whose case is being enquired into, nevertheless it was carried out in as courteous a way as possible without any fuss or publicity because we did not wish needlessly to harass people. We wanted as far as possible to get the truth and then to find out the way of recovering such taxes as we found justly due. In that matter too they have proceeded with considerable care. It was said by some honourable Members that the Commission has recovered only a small sum of Rs 80 lakhs or so. It is perhaps forgotten that this is only the first instalment of what they have put down as recoverable and this process of recovery will go on for three or four years. Every year you recover something and the sum to be covered comes to a considerable figure of crores. Because this enquiry has been of a highly judicial nature and has been very carefully conducted, it has taken time—the initial stages have taken a lot of time, to look up all kinds of books and papers which are not easily available. The initial stage of enquiry took much more time than normally it should have taken or we thought it would take. But the Commission, rightly I think, thought that even a little more time taken is better so that every party concerned must feel that justice has been done—and because of that most of the cases ultimately are by consent, some agreement arrived at in regard to the sum involved and the method of payment.

So, first of all, I would beg the House to consider this matter, that the present Bill has nothing to do with the larger question that the honourable Member, Prof Shah, has raised. Prof Shah's question is highly important. It is the basic question undoubtedly, and it can only be dealt with in a separate measure which treats with various methods of recovery of income-tax and with fighting evasion. And for my part, some of the suggestions made by Prof Shah seem to me very much worthy of consideration and giving effect to, and no doubt when the measure comes before the House other honourable Members would have many other suggestions to make. But you cannot consider that in this simple Bill which just says that the term of this Enquiry Commission should be extended by Government if it so deems fit. If the House asked me for how long this Enquiry Commission is going to sit, it is a little difficult for me to answer. Personally I imagine that within, may be two years or so it will probably complete its labours, but the difficulty in the past has been that the mere fact of a time-limit being there made some people feel that they should delay matters till the period of the time-limit so that the matter may not be finished. Therefore we came, after a great deal of thought, to this conclusion that no time-limit should be fixed. In fact, the quickest way of ending the Commission is not to fix a time-limit. I hope that the Commission's work, or a very very large part of it, will be over within certainly two years—I cannot

say exactly if every single case may be over by then. Now, suppose, as proposed by some honourable Members, we stop the work of the Commission? Well, that seems to me a most unfortunate procedure. We have proceeded with a number of cases, hundreds of them, and come to some arrangement, come to some decision. Now the others suddenly get off after enquiry has taken place or when it is taking place—in regard to some of them the enquiry is fairly advanced, in regard to others it is in early stages. In fact, those people who have adopted all those obstructionist tactics get off, those people who have cooperated to some extent have been, if you like, penalised or have agreed to something. Those who have been obstructing get off and their obstruction pays them, which would be unfortunate. Then honourable Members talked about a general amnesty.⁷ This I do not quite understand because so far as this Commission is concerned it is not dealing with the whole population or with everybody—it is dealing with specific cases referred to it. So, the amnesty simply means that the cases which are on *prima facie* evidence referred to the Commission will not be proceeded with in regard to those limited number of cases before them. I do not understand that, I think it would be very unfair to the other cases which they have dealt with. Therefore, once the House decides, and the country knows and everybody knows that this matter is going to be proceeded with to the end, it would be to the interest of all the parties to expedite it and finish it up.

I think it is desirable, and I am sure the House would welcome the suggestion I am making, that the Commission itself should report to the House, say, at the end of every year; as long as it is there it should submit a full report of what they have done and how they have done, for a discussion in the House. Secondly, whenever the Government sees fit to extend the period that fact will also be brought to the notice of the House so that the House can discuss it. If that is done, the House is seized of the matter and can express its views as it likes and this will eliminate the difficulty that the Commission is experiencing of a time-limit which prevents the Commission from going ahead and also the others who feel that the time-limit may stop their cases and they may not be taken. So I would beg the House to consider these various points and accept this very simple Bill as it is.

7. Thakur Das Bhargava and K.T. Shah were among those who suggested this.

2. The Budget¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: Sir, may I with your permission intervene and say a few words in regard to the various matters that have been discussed and in particular refer to certain broader aspects? My colleague the Finance Minister who is in charge of this particular Budget will no doubt deal with the specific matters that have been raised in the course of this debate, but I need hardly remind the House of the fact that although this Budget is the individual responsibility of the Finance Minister, it is the responsibility of the entire Government, and as Prime Minister I am entirely responsible for it as well as any other Member of Government. This Budget was placed before the House after such consideration as is usual to be given to it by Government and Government are completely committed to it. That does not mean that we are not prepared to consider any proposals made, so long as the whole structure of the Budget is not affected.

Now, my honourable friend Prof Shah pointed out various difficulties in the way of a debate here and in the way of a consideration of the Budget proposals. He pointed out how little time was allotted and how little could be done in that little time. I am in entire sympathy with him in this matter and if there are any practical proposals which enable us to give more time for effective consideration of these problems by effective debate either formally or informally, I am quite sure that the Finance Minister will gladly consider them and we can all try to evolve a better method, if there is any. The real difficulty is something much more basic. It is, if I may say so, that the kind of problems, which Government have to face now are so vast and intricate that it is impossible for any democratic Parliamentary Assembly to give enough time for their consideration. It is just a question of time. This is not a new difficulty. I remember long debates about this took place in a country like the United Kingdom where they found that it was not possible for them to get along with what is really 19th century procedure, in this 20th century of continuous crisis, social problems, international problems and the like. So gradually even parliamentary procedure in the United Kingdom has changed and many matters are left more to Committees than to the House itself, because the House cannot simply consider them. Usually a principle is decided by the House and the working of it is left to Committees. That is a difficulty inherent in the situation. If we can find a remedy for it, it will not only be good for us but may be we might set an example to other democratically inclined countries who are seeking such remedies....²

1. Statement in Parliament, 14 March 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol IX, Part II, columns 4537–4547.
2. H.V. Kamath remarked that Parliament sat continuously in England.

In spite of the fact that Parliament is in continuous session, they are not able to find time to consider in detail all the important matters that come up. We have much less time because we are not in continuous session. Inevitably, I suppose, our sessions will gradually become longer and longer, as they have to deal with more and more problems and have more and more discussion. But that is another matter which can be considered and decided later. For the present, we do have that difficulty and though I am in sympathy with what Prof Shah said, I have no easy remedy to resolve that difficulty except to say that we are perfectly prepared to consider in common with honourable Members of the House any ideas or suggestions as to how we can give greater facilities for more intensive discussion of any great problem.

Now, the honourable Member referred to the Budget speech being directly or indirectly a survey of all manner of problems—domestic, international, economic, foreign, etc. It is perfectly true that all kinds of things come up, but the House will hardly expect the Finance Minister's Budget speech to be a survey of all these tremendous problems, although they affect each other no doubt. The world is becoming far too intricate and difficult for us to keep the full picture in view.

If I may come to a relatively smaller sphere, as I listened to the honourable Member who just now spoke, I was wondering how far we were in this debate keeping the larger picture in mind and not getting lost in a few minor and secondary matters. As an example, I may refer to what the honourable Member, after referring to Government's extravagance and not looking at things in the right way, said in regard to our bringing forward a Bill for giving a pension to the President.³ That struck me significantly as an approach to this problem which might be said, in mild language, to be 100 per cent wrong. Apart from that I think the subject of a pension for the President was hardly a matter, I should have thought, for debate or reference here in any context. I say, even if this country is starving, even then you have to provide for our President.

Ramnarayan Singh⁴: Not at all.

JN: The honourable Member Babu Ramnarayan Singh perhaps prefers starvation for the President and himself. I certainly will not come in his way. But we are considering graver matters than this, and the fact that these things are raised shows that we are looking at them not on merits. But apart from merits, we are not really thinking of this vast problem that we are faced with and

3. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya asked why Government had introduced a Bill relating to the pension of the President, while they had been asking the common man to pay more taxes on tobacco and kerosene.

4. (1885-1964); prominent Congressman from Bihar; imprisoned on several occasions for participating in national movement; Member, Indian Legislative Assembly, 1927-46, Constituent Assembly, 1946-50, Provisional Parliament, 1950-52 and Lok Sabha, 1952-57.

wrestle with—the vast problem of the country's economy in relation to the world economy, the vast problem which is determined not only by our own decisions, but also to a large extent by happenings and events and developments in the world which are beyond our scope and control.

Now I propose to say a few words in regard to the general approach, rather than to specific problems. I am sorry to confess that I have not been here throughout the budget discussions.⁵ I have listened to some speeches when I was here with care and I have also taken care to read the full reports of the speeches made when I was not present here. I have found a multitude of criticisms—criticisms to the effect that the Government is not functioning efficiently, or is not suppressing this evil or that evil, that there is frustration and so on and so forth.⁶ Now, when reading those speeches or listening to them I felt that with a large measure of what was said, for instance by my respected friend and colleague, Acharya Kripalani, I can quite well be in agreement. Nevertheless, I was in disagreement with many of the conclusions he arrived at.⁷ One can quite agree with individual criticisms: one can pick out so many things in India, or in the doings of this Government or anybody else with which you may agree or disagree. You can also pick out naturally different things which have a different bearing on the subject. Now, how are we to look at this picture? You can look at it from the point of view of criticism and you have every right to do so. If there was an effective opposition in this House, undoubtedly it would be its right and function to point out the failings of Government and to put forward constructive proposals. As there is no effective opposition, for my part, I welcome the criticism of colleagues and honourable Members who are supposed to look more or less in the same direction in regard to policy. I welcome all their criticism. But in criticising, in considering a situation, it is not enough merely to criticise us. Criticism is useful and desirable to keep the Government upto the mark. But one has to see the full picture, one has to balance things; one has to realise that the problems we have to face are difficult and intricate problems for which we cannot find an easy or magical solution. One has to compare the problems we have with the problems of other countries. We have to see what is the common bearing, the common factor, see how they arise, how far they are due to our failings or to world conditions and how we are to meet them. There are hundred aspects of that problem which we have to consider. In other words,

5. From 3 to 5 March, Nehru was in Bombay and on 10 March 1951, he visited Nilokheri.
6. On 10 March, Kripalani said that the Government had failed to achieve "even a partially stable price-level" thus enabling "anti-social forces" to indulge in hoarding and black-marketing leading to adulteration. The country was in the slough of depression, and every class felt frustrated.
7. Kripalani complained that Government's policy being not to tax capital, the revenue and capital expenditure had to be combined. So the only course left to the Finance Minister was to tax the common man and this led to inflation.

the approach can be and should be critical. But, if I may with all respect say so, if it is to be helpful, the approach to a thing should be by seeing every aspect—the good and the bad—trying to understand the basic problem which faces the country and then trying to find a solution.

Now, during the course of the last few months, the Planning Commission has been specially charged with considering these various problems,⁸ not the details of administration, but rather the basic problems, not only purely economic, but anything that goes towards the building up of a nation's economy and the like. That Planning Commission with which I have the honour to be associated—the Finance Minister also is there—has come up, in the course of its discussions, against many of these basic difficulties. No doubt it will present some kind of a preliminary report to this House and Government in the course of a month or two when the House will have an opportunity of considering the problem in its various aspects. What I wish the House to consider is that the kind of problems we have to face here are *mutatis mutandis*, common problems in many countries in the world today. Whether you call those countries capitalist or socialist or communist, the problem is the same. The world has to face certain difficulties due to certain basic causes. There are different ways of approach and finding a solution. It is not enough for this House or for this Government to dispose of the solution of the problem by saying that we shall follow the capitalist way, or the way of private enterprise, or the socialist or communist way. If you say that, all that you mean is that you shall adopt a certain approach in understanding and in trying to find a solution to that problem, which may be socialist, or any other. That is all that it means. You do not solve the problem by passing a decree or a law—let us have socialism, or let us have nationalisation—or by the slogan "Tax the rich". Certainly tax anybody who can bear the taxation, tax him as hard as you like. Certainly let us have a socialistic outlook; let us go towards socialisation of our means of production. We can do that. But if you want constructive suggestion as to how to solve it a mere approach is not enough. You have to deal with that problem in a practical and hard way and find out the definite and precise steps that have to be taken. That is the way the Planning Commission is trying to work and that is the way, I hope, when its report comes before it, this House will consider it. That is the way inevitably that a Government has to function.

Now a Government is apt to go wrong, because a Government is overburdened by pressing problems and it has little time to think in a coordinated and integrated way. It tries to, of course. But generally, every Department of

8. The Planning Commission was to prepare detailed plans for the public sector, working plans for individual industries and cottage industries and a programme of implementation of agricultural targets. The final plan was expected to be ready by the end of August 1951.

Government is over-burdened and that again is a difficulty of all Governments the wide world over. We are facing crisis after crisis—domestic, international—and just cannot think in calm terms of the future. Therefore, it becomes quite necessary and essential that there should be people not over-burdened by the problems of the day, who can think in this integrated way; and that is the necessity for a Planning Commission, working in close cooperation with the Government, thinking of these problems in this manner, offering suggestions, proposals and recommendations which the Government may consider and the Legislature can consider and give effect to, if it so chooses. Now I have been, both in this House and outside, often criticized for the doings of my Government or myself, and I have thought that it is always good to try to find out one's failings. And obviously there are failings. It is quite absurd for anyone to say that this Government or any Government has not made mistakes and will not make mistakes and has not any failures. We must be careful and introspective. We must correct our errors and welcome healthy criticism. So I have often laid stress on that, and I propose to go on laying stress on that.

But when I lay stress on that I also sometimes, less often, mention some of the achievements—they are not my achievements that I might be proud of, but such things as have been done, of the achievements of the country, of the people, of the various Governments—so that if you want to picture what is happening you have to see both sides, the credit side and the debit side. You have to remember how far both these sides are governed by factors beyond not only this Government's control but this House's control. They are big factors affecting the world. Things happen. If tomorrow or in a few months or a year later a world war comes—well, it may be that this Government, this House and this country will not be responsible for it, that we have tried to avoid it, that we have tried to make others avoid it, and not indulge in it—yet we will be affected by it. We will not be able to escape the consequences of that war even though we may try to keep out of that, as I hope we will. We will not be able to avoid the consequences. There may be so many other factors, economic and other, affecting us and affecting both our achievements and our failures, that may lessen our achievements and make our failures bigger than what they might have been. Looking at this balance I have a feeling, a great deal sometimes, of distress at various factors. But at no time have I had a feeling, if I may say so, of frustration. And I do not personally like this word "frustration" being used so as often as it is. A person who sees frustration in another usually has it in his own mind and heart, and he conveys that sense to the other too. If I experience that sheer feeling of frustration in my work, I think at that time I would cease to have any value in this Government, because the spirit that makes one work, the vision that draws one would cease and vanish. Then I would become a mere head and I do not think I could be of much use to this Government or to the House then.

Therefore I would like you to consider this balance-sheet as it is, what the Government has achieved—not that I take credit for it—what the country has achieved with the help of the Government, and to some extent by itself, and then look at this picture.

Another thing I should like the House to remember is this. Are we not to think of tomorrow also sometimes and not lose ourselves in our todays? So far as I am concerned I must confess to you that tomorrow is slightly more important to me than today. I cannot ignore today, obviously. But tomorrow is more important. Because if we are thinking in terms of progress of this country, then we have to build for that tomorrow, and we have to build on a firm foundation even though the laying of that foundation may create some difficulties today. Now, that is an outlook. One may make a mistake or an error in doing that. That is a different matter.

Then again, there is talk of inefficiency and corruption and the like. A good deal of that talk is correct. But that is not a matter of policy, surely. We all agree, every intelligent person agrees that there should be efficiency, that there should be a clean government from top to bottom. And we shall strive to achieve that where it is lacking. That is a matter of ways and means, if you like. May I in this connection add that while I admit that there is inefficiency and wastage and while there is nepotism and corruption too in the country, I would like to say—and I speak from my own experience, as every honourable Member is entitled to his experience—that in spite of all this talk we are a more efficient and a more clean nation than most nations in the wide world. That of course does not mean that we should be happy over that position: we should always strive to better it and we should invite the cooperation of others in doing so. But there again, we should approach this problem rather in a constructive way and not merely offer destructive criticism. Now, our services are often criticized. Any large service of a large country is bound to be, well, good, bad and indifferent all together, in patches. And it is very easy to pick out the bad parts of it and to criticize them or to criticize other aspects of it. I do not think I have been very lenient in criticizing where I have found that criticism was necessary. Nevertheless I should like to say that this widespread criticism of the services is totally uncalled for and that our services, taken all in all, are a fine body of men and women. They have black sheep, they have mediocres, they have fools. They have all of them, obviously. In any body of men you have first-rate, second-rate and third-rate men. But taken all in all they are an able lot. Some are very fine, and they are a loyal people carrying out the policies that Government lays down. If any person goes wrong let us criticize him or bring him to task as an individual but not talk vaguely about groups and services which can only dishearten even the good people there and make them more inefficient and, well, less confident in their work. So, when Acharya Kripalani tells this House about

the ineptitude of Government and the inefficiency and the corruption and the wastage, I agree with him in a measure, I appreciate his distress at the state of affairs in the country because he and I and many of us here have had high ideals and when we find that we cannot reach those ideals we are distressed and are not happy. Nevertheless I would remind him that there is another picture and sometimes others see that other picture better than we can. I have had occasions to meet eminent people coming from other countries, looking at this picture of India, what it has done and what it has failed to do, experts in their fields, knowing a great deal about the world, of what is happening and what has been done in other countries today and I have found people coming here, not with great admiration for India, not with any great love for India, nevertheless struck and struck greatly by the achievement of India in the last few years. They were not blind to our feelings, but they could see the achievements. If we can achieve in basic things, then it is well, even though we might fail in a hundred smaller things. Many honourable Members might have gone to the Engineering Exhibition that has been here for the last two months and more.⁹ That is a wonderful record of basic things being done in India. It is a record which you see whether you are an Indian or a non-Indian. I was filled with a certain pride in our achievement and in what is being done. The foreigners also saw with surprise that this country of India, after all the troubles it had and all the shouting that is going on, still is achieving these big things. Then there are bigger things. Many of the matters that we discuss at length in this House are sometimes so because there is construction going on, creation going on, things that give wealth to a country, the things that build up a nation.

Take your national laboratories; they do not produce engines today. But those laboratories are something which "bowl over" a man who comes from abroad. That is not so because we have constructed—that is nothing—but because of the fine work that is being done there by a thousand or more eminent enthusiastic young scientists of India. One has pride in them and in their work and on that basis India can build its future, if they have a chance and if we do not lose ourselves in trivialities and in the small things of life. So I can go on mentioning many things, the basic things that are being done and I hope, will be done in the future. Take a thing which is small in itself but which I for one admire very greatly. The other day I was in Bombay and I visited the Aarey Milk Scheme, which the Bombay Government has started.¹⁰ It is a magnificent project. We talk in this House sometimes about preserving

9. The International Engineering Exhibition organised by the Indian National Committee was opened on 10 January 1951 in New Delhi by N.V. Gadgil. Nineteen countries participated in it. It continued for sixty eight days.

10. On 4 March 1951, Nehru inaugurated the Aarey Milk Colony in north Bombay. For his inaugural speech, see *post*, pp. 620-624.

cattle, about vanaspati ghee and other matters and no doubt what we say is worthwhile but we talk, if I may say so, always in the negative sense. Do not do this, stop that etc. and not what we are to do about it. We want milk in this country. Agreed. But nobody proposes how we are to get the milk except negatively to do this or that, stop this or stop that. Their milk scheme is a scheme to provide pure, fine milk to millions and millions of people in Bombay. Now that is a sort of thing which I should like to spread all over the country and incidentally not only in providing good milk and cheap milk but in looking after the cows and the buffaloes and all that in a constructive way, of cattle preservation and the rest. That I can understand. So I would like the House to consider this general aspect, of what Government has done with the help of the country and this House.

Of course, there are other things which are in the process of being done and which do not yield immediate results. If we have river-valley schemes, obviously you cannot expect immediate results or dividends. You have to wait two or three or five or ten years perhaps. Do you wish us to carry those schemes and those basic things even though they do not yield results or is it better to please our people today by lessening their burdens somehow? We can lessen it somewhat, but then tomorrow, they will have no chance of any further progress. The basic thing is that in order to have progress, whether you are a communist State or a socialist or a capitalist State, you must save money for progress every year; you must produce more than you can consume as a State. If you consume more than you produce, you have bankruptcy. If you consume just enough then you remain where you are and you do not go ahead. Remember always the fact that if our production goes up a little, so does our population and you have therefore to reckon with that too and produce more than that or take some other measures to check that growing population.

Nor is it our policy to increase even the population of every kind of animal in this country, to allow the old and lame animals to increase, and not even to prevent wild animals from coming and spoiling our fields and eating up our crops. Some of our traditions and customs come in the way of our food production and come in the way of our economy. Has any honourable Member ever calculated how much wastage there is from that source? Honourable Members quite rightly point out wastage in Government and say something has happened and this or that should be done. There is enormous wastage going on because we follow certain old customs and traditions, which have no bearing in the modern world. That is not thought of so much and they might well crush us in spite of any economy that we might adopt.

So it is in this larger framework that I should like to consider this Budget or anything else that we might do. I submit to this House that India undoubtedly has tremendous potential resources. India has skilful men and women to utilise those resources. We have to yoke them together, the men and women and the

natural resources. We are trying to do it in some small measure and we have to do it more effectively. In the measure we do so, in the measure that people work hard, we produce wealth. There is no other way. By a piece of legislation, you will not solve this problem unless we become a hard-working nation—with all respect to many people, I will say that we are not a hard-working nation. I travel abroad a good deal and I see how other nations are facing their problems, the hard work they are putting in, whether it is in Europe or whether it is in China or Japan and whatever policy they may pursue, communist or socialist or the other, they work hard and they suffer privations much more than most of us do. I am not talking about the poor peasant or the poor worker in India, but generally speaking, the people of other countries today are suffering far more privation than we do. I wish we could evolve a way, whether it is in food or in any other matter—I am not talking about the general public at the present moment, but of those who are somewhat better off—I wish we could evolve some way, because I think it is a painful and hateful thing for people to go about feasting when there is a food problem and there is privation and suffering all over the country.

H.V. Kamath: It is mostly in Government receptions that there is feasting.

JN: Government receptions are not to blame, Government receptions do not touch the food problem. Any person who imagines that at these receptions in the President's House or anywhere else there is feasting, is entirely wrong. There is none unless you call a cup of tea a feast.

It is now a fairly considerable time, a very long time, since I occupied this place as Prime Minister and previously also in the Government. It seems even much longer than it has been because it has been a difficult time, because there had been crisis after crisis, and because all the things that one intended to do—most of them—could not be done. Often some kind of disillusionment came and doubts came to one's mind. Nevertheless, some part of the whole vision persisted; some faith in the people of India persisted and one tried to do one's best. Whether this Government has succeeded or not succeeded, I suppose some dispassionate historian in the future will say. In the meanwhile, of course, all our Members should say that certainly we wanted to succeed. What I am concerned with, and I suppose my colleagues who are more or less of my age, with whom I have laboured for these thirty years or more, are concerned with, is that in the afternoon of our lives, in these remaining years, we should devote all the energy that we have to realise the ideals which we have held; not to forsake them. Yet, it is painful to feel all the time that while you hold the ideals, something comes in the way and you cannot get going as you want to. There are so many factors in the world that you do not control. The human material that you work with is not good and you have your own failings. So, you do not realise those ideals as you wanted to.

Nevertheless, it is something to hold them and to try one's utmost to realise them and to give all one's strength and energy in that process till one is exhausted and is thrown away.

3. To Hare Krushna Mahtab¹

New Delhi

June 8, 1951

My dear Mahtab,²

I have kept away from the Economic Committee³ of the Cabinet and have not been able to follow its various decisions, more especially in regard to matters which affect the price structure. Ever since I went last year to Indonesia, and returned to find that certain important decisions had been taken hurriedly by the Cabinet in my absence, I have been worried.⁴ I have been waiting for the Planning Commission to present its report⁵ so that we might take an integrated view of the situation and lay down definite policies. But the Planning Commission delays and, meanwhile, we go on taking steps which tend to send prices up. In order to get some immediate gain we lose sight of the ultimate objective.

I propose to go into these matters rather thoroughly during this interval between the two sessions. Next to food, probably the most important thing from the point of view of the public is cloth. Much of the unpopularity of Government is due to cloth shortage; not only shortage, but also the unsatisfactory nature of the cloth produced and often the false marking of price. I am told that, generally, the European firms are honest about quality

1. H.K. Mahtab Papers, NMML.
2. He was the Union Minister for Industries and Commerce at this time.
3. The Committee on the Reorganisation of the Machinery of Government, 1949, recommended the setting up of Committees of Cabinet—a clear distinction being made between Standing Committees and Ad hoc Committees of Cabinet—for the purpose of proper division of labour and effective delegation within the Cabinet. The Economic Committee of Cabinet was one of the four Standing Committees that were set up.
4. The Cabinet sanctioned a loan of Rs 1,43,13,740 for financing permanent improvement schemes under the food production campaign of the Government of Madhya Pradesh. In addition, a grant of Rs 24,62,082 was also sanctioned to meet 50% of the expenditure incurred by the State Government on the intensive cultivation scheme proposed to be launched. The Government also provided for more foreign exchange for imports on the basis of increased earnings from exports.
5. The National Planning Commission presented an outline report on 9 July 1951.

and price and follow instructions. This is not so generally with many Indian firms. However that may be, this cloth situation, which has given rise to so much trouble and dissatisfaction, has been beyond my comprehension thus far. *Prima facie*, if there is a famine of cloth in India, we stop exports, or almost stop them. The needs of the people in India are far more important than the profits of industry or even markets abroad. This is only a first reaction, but I should like a good deal of proof to the contrary to make me reverse it. It seems to me that in this, as in many other things, we lose sight of the primary objective of Government to fulfil the needs of the people first.

You have made many statements and given long promises, but there is no marked improvement. I have an idea that we are continually playing into the hands of the textile manufacturers. All our strict rules etc just mean nothing.

I am writing to you to tell you how my mind is working. I want to go into this matter rather thoroughly later.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Planning and Development¹

...Just now you read a *Maan patra* in which mention was made of Kosi. A map had been drawn up of the Kosi project to construct a huge dam—it is to be perhaps the highest in the world—and you may remember what the estimated cost was. Let me remind you that it was 172 crores of rupees. Now that is by no means a small amount even for the largest country in the world and certainly it was not, for India. It is my opinion that the Kosi project is very necessary and should be somehow constructed. We must make a start even though it may take a few years to complete because as you know, in some parts of Bihar every year a strange difficulty arises, bringing disaster and ruin. Every year we have had to bear losses of crores of rupees. Apart from that we are unable to take advantage of such a tremendous potential for power from the rivers which flow from the Himalayas. We can produce electricity and use it for irrigation in places where there is water shortage. In today's world, man has the power to combat even the skies if they are against him. If the monsoons fail, arrangements can be made for irrigation by building canals, etc. All this

1. Parts of speech at a public meeting at Patna, 19 June 1951. AIR Tapes, NMML. Original in Hindi. Extracts. For other parts of the speech, see *post*, pp. 57-60.

is possible. But we need a great deal of money for all this. From the time we formed this Government or you may say even before that, the basic thing which has constantly been in my mind is that we should construct dams on all these big rivers and build canals so that water can be supplied far and wide, production will increase and we can have power and electricity. We can use that power for thousands of things. Nowadays if you wish to compare the rate of development in any country, the first thing that is seen is the amount of power produced in that country. From that their progress is calculated because power is needed to run factories and trains and millions of other things. It produces new wealth.

So, if India is to progress, she has to produce new wealth. What is new wealth? It is not gold and silver which are the tools of trade of businessmen. The real wealth is what we produce from land or factories or cottage industries. In short, whatever new is produced constitutes wealth. Transferring it from one pocket to another does not constitute wealth. Therefore right from the beginning, in fact long before our Government was constituted, perhaps you may know that I have taken a great interest in planning. A planning committee was constituted² and I worked with it for many years and drew up plans to increase production, set up new industries, produce electricity. So the moment we came to power, we wanted to start these things and we are doing some of them too. You may have heard of the Damodar Valley project,³ Bhakra Nangal,⁴ Hirakud⁵ and Mahanadi and many others. This is something basic that we are doing and thereby laying the foundations of the future progress of India. I am convinced that without this foundation, India cannot progress, whatever laws we may pass in Delhi or Patna. Laws cannot induce progress, they can only clear the way for progress. Progress depends on the hard work of human beings and production of more power like electricity, and by construction of canals and river valley schemes.

So we started this task. It is a gigantic task. People forget that when they criticize us. They forget the fundamental things that have happened in India. The biggest of these is that we are bringing these large rivers under our control. If you look at the map of India, especially of the Himalayas, you can imagine the tremendous potential that is hidden in these mountains. I am not talking of anything religious. I am talking of scientific matters, of the tremendous power which is available. Leave aside the minerals. It is the rivers

2. The National Planning Committee came into existence in October 1938.
3. A multi-purpose scheme, costing Rs 55 crores, designed to control floods, irrigate about 7,63,800 acres of land and supply power to the provinces of Bihar and West Bengal, was started in 1948.
4. In Punjab.
5. Hirakud project in Orissa, started on 12 April 1948, was part of the great Mahanadi Scheme of river valley development.

which have the greatest potential for power—hydro-electric power—which can make the whole of India free if we tap them. Anyhow, it may be difficult to tap all of them and it takes time, but we can progress gradually and build the edifice of India's progress upon that.

So this is the basic thing that we have achieved and it will show results in a couple of years. If the Kosi project is completed, it will make a big difference in a few years' time. Then we realize that in today's world a country can progress only with the help of science. Why do people go running to the United States or England? We go there to buy their machinery and to learn science from them and to learn new scientific methods from them. They make aeroplanes and practically all the big things which we use and for which we are dependent on them. So long as our country does not begin to harness science—the real power behind the world of today—we will merely be imitating the others. Learning science does not mean that some of you become BSc's or MSc's. That is only the first step. Science means all these new inventions and discoveries. We must do them in our country also so that we are equal to, if not ahead of, the others. Then you will not be dependent on others. This is the fundamental thing. Everything else is artificial. If one of our big businessmen puts up a factory and imports the machinery from the United States or England, it cannot make much difference to India. A few people may make some money, that is all. But there is a difference if we can control science, for that is the basis of the modern world. We must make the same degree of progress in scientific matters as the other countries and not be content with imitating them. This is a fundamental thing.

So, considering all this, we have put our entire strength behind setting up big scientific laboratories in the country. There are eleven at the moment. There is no time just now for me to tell you about them, but we have made tremendous progress and there is great respect for us in the world of science today. We have gained monetarily too and I have no doubt that we will benefit much more and make all sorts of new discoveries. I would like to tell you that it is not merely a question of putting in our money. There are many things in India which do not reassure me and on the contrary make me sad. But one thing that does reassure me is that when I go to these big science laboratories which are spread out all over the country and see our young scientists at work and the ability shown by those young men and women, I feel very happy because I know that they are laying down the foundations of a new India much more effectively than the people sitting here or in Delhi making speeches or those who can do nothing but criticize us. The basic tasks cannot be done by speeches and slogans and that foundation is being laid by our river valley schemes and in our science laboratories. We have to do much more. But as I said, we need a great deal of money for all this. Where is that money to come from and how to save it? If we consume everything that is

produced in the country in one year, there is nothing left over for progress. Where is the money to come from? It cannot come from outside and even if we take loans, they will have to be returned. So it means clearly that we must spend less than what we produce so that there is something left over for development. This is the basic thing to remember.

A year ago, the Planning Commission was constituted in Delhi.⁶ The task of the Planning Commission is not merely to draw up plans, as people think. We have made any number of plans. The task of the Planning Commission is firstly to examine where the country should go and to clarify its goals and ideals. Even more important is to consider the strength and resources of the country because we need both money and trained personnel to go ahead. You cannot do even the most ordinary things without trained men...

You have a great many examples before you. There is the example of the Soviet Union, a country which has undoubtedly made great progress. But have you ever considered the price that the Soviet Union has paid for that progress? For years and years, they preferred to live with shortages so that their children could have a better future. They made big plans and completed them. They deliberately went without many things to ensure progress in the future. Do you have the determination to sacrifice now for a better future or to bear some hardships today? Do the people of India have that courage? It is not for the Government to say. Whichever Government may be in power faces this question as to how to save something for future development. If we consume everything that we produce in a year, there is nothing left for development next year and we stay where we are. And if we consume more than we earn in a year, it is obvious that we shall become bankrupt. There is no question of progress then.

These are some of the big problems that confront us. So planning is not something merely on paper as people imagine. Nor can mere passing of laws solve our problems. If problems could be solved by passing laws, why would there be any tension or problems in the world? They would all be solved by passing a few laws here and there. But laws are important too. Laws help us to make progress by removing the obstacles in our path. But laws cannot do the work for us. That can be done only by the physical and mental exertion of the people. Take one law, for instance, which has been talked about all over India and in Bihar regarding the zamindari system. At least for the last twenty years our goal regarding the zamindari system has been quite clear at least in the Congress and the people thought that we would tackle the problem as soon as we came to power. It is a strange thing that three or four years have gone by but the task has still not been completed. It is true that we have not been quiet, we have made efforts and then the matter got stuck in the law

6. The National Planning Commission was appointed in March 1950.

court which has delayed the whole thing. You know what has happened. Now especially for this, a new law has been passed by Parliament so that there may be no further delays.⁷ We consider this law to be absolutely essential for the progress of the nation. You must remember that merely by putting an end to the zamindari system, we cannot make progress—it will only clear the path for us to work hard and remove the obstacles in our way.

Today I was amazed to hear in Darbhanga where I toured for a few hours that certain relief works could not be undertaken because some zamindar had private rights over those lands.⁸ I was amazed that this sort of situation should still prevail and I expressed my opinion freely. Suppose, for instance, there was an enemy attack on India, it will be our duty to face it and fight. If, at that time, an individual was to come and claim that his private right was being violated in the process, what will our reply be? Can private rights be considered when a country is in danger? They cannot be. The whole world knows that. So when another kind of danger threatens and the people are likely to starve and if any private or vested interests stand in the way, I will only say, "To hell with them". I am not prepared to obey even court injunctions in this matter. If the courts stand in the way, new laws will be passed and if that too does not help, emergency will be declared. Not only my Government but no Government can tolerate a situation like this when an individual puts his rights before the fate of the nation. Such things cannot be tolerated in today's world.

So, as I was saying, this law against the zamindari system became essential. It is a strange thing that there is no question of animosity towards the zamindars. Please remember that it would be wrong to go and shout slogans against the zamindars. It would be meaningless. This is not a question of hostility towards anyone. On the other hand, I am even prepared to accept that at one time the zamindari system may have done good. Times are changing and what was good in one age becomes outdated and wrong and obstructive in another. It is no longer relevant. There was a time as you know when slavery was prevalent all over the world. I do not mean of nations but of individuals who were regarded as the personal property of someone and could be bought and sold. And it was considered absolutely right. Our ancestors did not think of it as wrong. But nobody will accept it today. They will say it is wrong for, after all, human beings are not anybody's property or chattels to be bought and sold. There was a war in the United States over the issue of slavery which lasted for four or five years. A great many people had advocated the retention

7. The Constitution (First Amendment) Act amended Article 19, securing the constitutional validity of zamindari abolition laws.

8. Dried up tanks could not be excavated by the Government for the people's use during acute water famine because these tanks belonged to zamindars.

of slavery when the demand for its abolition arose. Today nobody will vote in favour of slavery. In England when this question arose, it was argued that it would be against the law of God to abolish slavery. Great religious leaders had expressed themselves against it. Religion is invariably dragged into such things. In our country, religion is misused so much that its real meaning has been forgotten. So it is meaningless for us to talk of a custom as good or bad until we see it in its complete perspective. A thing which may be good in one age becomes useless in another. Therefore when we say that the zamindari system is wrong, it does not mean a personal animosity towards the zamindars for, after all, they are human beings like us, some good and some bad. The system itself is useless and harmful apart from the fact that it imposes a strain on the people. But the more fundamental thing is that the system does not contribute to progress in the country. We have the example of how other nations progress, industrially and otherwise. All these things cannot be done under the zamindari system. So it is irrelevant to our times and must be removed. We decided twenty years ago and it is a good thing that we have reached the stage when we can achieve our objective. But I would like to repeat once again that its removal does not mean that we wish to harm anyone or that we are hostile to them. In the Constitutional Amendment Bill which has been presented in Parliament, one or two clauses pertain to the Bihar zamindari.⁹ There is a Member of Parliament from Bihar who represents the zamindars and is himself a big zamindar,¹⁰ and it is not surprising if he had objected to the Bill. But I must say this to his credit that even though it was detrimental to his interests, he bore it patiently and voted for it. At that time he said something very sensible which I wish to openly admit before you. He said there is no use anyone fighting against it but that there should be no injustice in implementing the law. I said that it was obvious we too wished to avoid any discrimination. It is possible that views may differ about what constitutes justice. But as far as possible, we want to ensure that no one should feel that any injustice has been done to him or that he has been unfairly treated, I also offered to give some time if it would help in any way at all in solving the problem. I wrote to the Bihar Government and they have accepted my offer. We do not wish to cause any distress or loss to our colleagues or anyone else. But it is pretty obvious that if we have to make a choice between the welfare of the common people and the interests of a few hundred individuals, we shall choose the former, even if it means causing a little hardship to some. Ultimately, even that handful will benefit by a step taken for the welfare of the masses.

9. Clause 14 sought to introduce a schedule containing eleven enactments for the abolition of zamindaris in various States with a view to validating those statutes "notwithstanding anything in Chapter II of the Constitution."

10. Syamanandan Sahaya.

Well, I am getting carried away. What I wanted to tell you very simply was that some laws, like the one relating to the zamindari abolition, are very essential. But mere laws cannot lead to progress. For that we need intelligence and hard work. A law can only clear the way. A country can progress only if it increases its production. There is no other way. The United States is a very rich country. Why? It would be wrong to say that they have plundered the rest of the world. They have a large volume of trade but the United States is rich because it has an enormous rate of production. They produce so much from their factories and land, using new and scientific methods, that they are able to export vast quantities to other countries too. So they have become rich by their own hard work and intelligence. We must not think that they have plundered other countries. Their country has the tremendous capacity to produce wealth through hard work. Why is it that the most ordinary farmer there is much better off than the richest man here? Why is it that in the United States, the production from land per acre is four or five times as much as ours? This is worth considering. In India, I think, we produce nine or ten maunds of wheat per acre. How do the other countries produce three or four times more? You can imagine that it is not difficult to increase our production from nine or ten maunds to fifteen per acre because in other countries, they produce even more. If we try to increase our production, immediately India's wealth goes up one and a half times. Everyone will become better off. It is possible to do this. I have tried it as an experiment. I am no farmer, nor did I make a great effort. But the produce from one acre of land was thirty three maunds and the average is nine. It was almost four times more. I agree that the land was looked after very well and good fertilizers were used, which ordinarily farmers may not be able to do. Let me give you another example of something which has happened in many places. We took up a hundred villages in Etawah. We did not use big machines or tractors, nor did we make any special arrangements. We merely looked after the land better, used better quality seeds, etc, and the production went up from nine maunds to twenty two maunds per acre; almost two and a half times. So it can be done. But the difficulty is that our people, especially our youth, are busy shouting slogans, as if such things can solve all problems. I would like to tell you that we can achieve something only if we have scientific knowledge as they have in Europe and England and the United States. We cannot do anything without it. So the fundamental thing is to acquire more scientific knowledge.

Take our armed forces, for instance. They are very good. Our navy is small but very good. Our air force is manned by excellent men. Often I am depressed and disheartened about the state of affairs in Indian politics. But when I see the young boys and girls who are working in our science laboratories or young engineers, or men in the army, navy and air force, I feel buoyed with hope because they are first-rate people from the point of view of

intelligence, discipline, capacity to work hard, and the country can justly be proud of them.

So, as I was saying, our armed forces are very good. But an army can no longer fight with bows and arrows. We need modern weaponry. Where can we get them from? We can buy some from England or the United States for the time being. But undoubtedly what we get from them are things which they have themselves discarded. They have much better things now and so they sell second and third-rate things to us. The best things are not sold. They are kept hidden and taken out for use in times of war. The fact is that if we want to make our army first-rate, we will have to produce our own weapons and not rely on others. More important, we have to develop our science so that we do not remain backward and not have to copy others....

Suppose we have fifty crores of rupees. We must consider how to spend them and whether we should use it for getting food or to get military equipment or in development work. We spend a great deal on our army. We can disband the army and use that hundred or hundred twenty-five crores of rupees in the Kosi project here. Kosi is a very good project. There is no doubt about it that we can use it for the Kosi project if you are willing to accept that the army should be disbanded. But you will say that we cannot afford to endanger ourselves by disbanding the army, so it is difficult to make a choice in the utilization of resources. We did a very courageous thing last year which no country in the world has done. When the whole world is talking about armaments and increasing their forces, we reduced our army by fifty two thousand men....

I mentioned about the Planning Commission just now. I would like to tell you one thing more in this connection. I do not know if it is proper for me to divulge this just now or it should be announced later. But I think it is better to tell you. The Planning Commission has drawn up big plans but right from the beginning they have been of the view that no large plan can work in this country unless there is full cooperation from the people. This does not mean that the people should accept everything that the Government says. They can certainly oppose anything that they do not like but they should cooperate too, because these tasks will not wait for anyone. The question is how to ensure that cooperation. Well, there are many ways but there is one thing that has been in my mind. It does not concern the Government in any way and I am now speaking, not as the Prime Minister, but simply as Jawaharlal. I would like an organization—I do not like the word organization but there is no other way to describe it—to be formed with no connection with the Government or any political party in which anyone can come in, either from Government or the Congress or any other party. Its work should not be governmental or political but to help in the constructive, developmental work envisaged by the Plans. I will not go into the details but I hope that a beginning will soon be

made. Yes, it is obvious that this work will be done in an honorary capacity. We do not wish that this organization should ask for Government grants. We wish to keep it as far as possible away from Government. As I was saying, the effort should be to have people from all the parties participating in it even if they oppose us outside. We want that in every village and town, people should do something and if a beginning is made all over the country, we can make very rapid progress.

I have taken up a lot of your time. But since I have come here and I do not know when I shall get such an opportunity again, I would like to tell you a couple of things about our national politics and the turn that it has taken. Three or four days ago, a Convention was held in Patna and the foundation laid of a new party which is probably called the Praja Party.¹¹ I have been in Nepal during the last three days and did not see the newspapers. So I do not know what has been happening in the world in the last three days. I glanced at a paper this morning in Patna. Otherwise I have not read a single newspaper in the last three days. So I do not know what has been happening. I hope you will forgive me but I may not know something which you feel I do.

So this Convention was held and I hear that there was a great deal of criticism of the Congress and our present Government.¹² Anyhow, what objection can I have? Everyone has the right to say what he likes. I want to tell you that I have no objection whatsoever to the existence of opposition groups in the country. It is a good thing for the country and Parliament to have a good opposition as otherwise the Government does not function properly and tends to become complacent and the Parliament also does not work well. So this principle is fully acceptable to me. But two or three things come to my mind which weaken this principle just now. One is that when I look at the world situation today, I find that danger is rearing its head on all sides and I do not want anything to happen in India which can weaken the country. The world of today is a dangerous world and no one knows when there will be a conflagration. India is peaceful inspite of petty conflicts here and there. But there are many wrong things happening in India also. There are many divisive

11. The All-India Political Convention, a convention of dissident Congress workers, presided over by J.B. Kripalani, was held in Patna on 16-17 June 1951. The proposed new party was named the Kisan-Mazdoor Praja Party or "Praja Party".
12. The draft manifesto of the Subjects Committee of the newly-formed Kisan-Mazdoor Praja Party declared at the meeting of 15 June 1951 that a top-heavy, inefficient and corrupt administration was the heaviest burden on the impoverished and overstrained economy. So it would be their primary endeavour to reform the services and examine to what extent it was possible to reduce the scope of administrative interference in the citizens' life and work. It added that black-marketeers and other anti-social elements should be put down with a ruthless hand. A resolution said that the Congress had suffered a serious decline and the people were confused and bewildered.

and subversive forces in the country. People are incited often in the name of religion and other things. These are the dangers. In general they may not have been very dangerous but the condition of the world is frightening and we feel that our complacency and internal dissensions may make us unfit to combat the dangers that may arise. Therefore, though I have no objection to having strong opposition parties and I consider them useful, looking to the present situation, I do feel that people should pay more attention to the basic problems and a little less to the superficial questions. I do not say that there should be no opposition. But every individual has to help in solving these problems. There are many problems but the question is of priority. We cannot take up everything at the same time. So we have to decide which to do first and which later. This is a test of a human being. If a man forgets the fundamental things and gives priority to less important matters, he will be in trouble. Whenever I meet people, it is my desire to put the history of the last three to four years before them. You may have read about them in newspapers. But you may not have analysed it properly. What were the broad events and what were the good and the bad things that happened? I shall be able to tell you about the weaknesses and defects of my Government, but I think our opposition have far more of them.

It is obvious that we have made mistakes but I would like to point out how, on every occasion, we have given priority to the right things.... So long as proper attention is paid to priorities, we become stronger to deal with other problems. If we fail to do so, we will achieve nothing. Generally, people are absorbed in their family matters or problems of their area or town. They are no doubt essential. But they must give thought occasionally about the broader national issues also. Very often they cannot pay attention to them because they do not have all the facts before them. World problems are even further away. People are generally ready to air their opinions freely in clubs whether they know the facts or not and they are capable of understanding the problems. If you are immersed in your petty problems, it is possible that you may not have the correct perspective to consider India's problems. This is true of parties too. I am not afraid of opposition. It is a good thing. But there should be a perspective and the priorities should be decided. That is a big help in such matters. I will just give you a glimpse of the last three to four years. You may remember that when our country became independent three and a half or four years ago, the first thing that confronted us was a terrible catastrophe in the Punjab and Delhi and all over North India. You know the sort of terrible things that happened and as a result, more than a crore of refugees came to our country. At that time if you had asked me about my priorities, all other grandiose schemes and plans had vanished from my mind. The first thing was to stem the tide of violence in the streets. I was sad and angry at what was happening in Pakistan. But I was filled with shame about the things that were

happening in our own country. Please believe me, there was absolutely no difference between the two countries in this. Both indulged in senseless violence. I was ashamed to think that the work of a life time lay in ruins. Anyhow, we had to face it, there was no way of running away. So that became our first priority. We saw that it was not a question of people's anger behind all these things. There were people who were actively organizing these things for month ahead. There were all sorts of groups who wished to break up the newly independent India. These were big problems. One day it will be written down as history because many of them who were responsible for these atrocities at that time are now talking big. To stop that violence became a matter of first priority. Gradually the matter was brought under control and the refugees given shelter. Then the issue of Kashmir came up and all sorts of other problems. If you bear all this in mind when you think of the last three to four years, you might be able to understand why there has been delay in doing other things.

Anyhow, as I was saying, a convention was held here. I have no objection to that. I am unhappy about it because at this point in our history, it is extremely important for us to work together in harmony. I do not mean that other views should be suppressed, but cooperation is essential. The trends that I see are perhaps a result of the coming elections. The atmosphere is certainly full of friction and divisiveness which seems absolutely wrong to me. Therefore I have tried for the last few days to put an end to this in the Congress. I have no objection to dissent in general, nor do I wish to keep anyone forcibly. But at the moment I consider it harmful. Another thing which I consider harmful is that while any differences in ideology or policy are all right, what is in fact happening is personal abuse and criticism. There is very little talk of politics. Everyone has the right to criticize. But the fear is that such things can lower the standard of politics considerably and the air will be constantly filled with mutual recriminations and abuses. That is no politics. It is more appropriate to a fish-market. I am not happy about this. Let us talk of policies. Every individual has the right to criticize the Government for its mistakes. I have no objection to that. But we wish to preserve a high standard in our politics and especially to avoid recriminations and abuse. I am prepared to accept happily any criticism of me or my Government. I will reply patiently. But I do not want it to spread. I can supply enough material to others for criticizing me and the list of my mistakes during the last three to four years is a long one. I can present it before you and it bothers me tremendously. But the problems before us are not confined to me or to you or anyone personally. They are larger issues which concern the entire country and her future. We are here for a while. Most of us have lived our lives and perhaps do not have very much longer to go. We will continue to do our work but ultimately the burden of running this country will have to be shouldered by others. The question is

when our time is over, what sort of atmosphere we shall leave behind in India for others. If we make it a habit to indulge openly in personal abuse and insults, others will learn to do the same. How will that affect our country? This is what bothers me.

There is one other thing. I shall mention it as I spoke about our youth. I said just now that I feel proud of our youngsters in the armed forces. Many people come to me, engineers and scientists, foreign service officers and others, all of whom are doing excellent work though there are some who are not up to the mark. But nowadays when I see the student world, I am amazed and often wonder whether there is some disorder in my brain or theirs. It is obvious that I do not mean all of them but some of their activities and the things they say are so utterly absurd and wrong that if they are accepted, it can only lead to total ruination, theirs as well as ours. At least I am not willing to accept it and I shall make it quite clear that if this state of affairs continues in our colleges and universities, I shall openly advocate closing them down. There is no need for such education in our country. There is no need for you to cheer and clap. It is worrying. Obviously it is useless for me to say that I shall close them down because no country can go on in that way. But my saying such a thing shows the extent of my concern. I do not think for a moment that all our boys and girls are spoiled. But the atmosphere has become so vitiated that there is a complete lack of discipline. It is obvious that I would not dream of entrusting any responsibility to such individuals. An individual who grows up in an atmosphere of irresponsibility cannot suddenly understand the meaning of responsible behaviour. Take the question of examinations. People think that they must pass them somehow. We get all sorts of protests that the examination papers were difficult and that they should be given more marks and be allowed to pass, etc, as though examinations are the essence of education. I want to tell you that a BA or an MA has no value in India. They may be very good in themselves but the value has gone down so rapidly that I am not prepared to select anyone merely on that basis unless I am convinced that he has other qualities. This is the situation. I rather liked one of the recommendations of the University Commission and I hope that it will some day be accepted. The recommendation was that University education and award of degrees should not be in any way concerned with Government. It would be separate from the need for employment, otherwise our education will be ruined. A country does not progress on the basis of our BAs and MAs but on how trained and skilled we become in any profession we adopt. Education should impart knowledge and wisdom. If you do not learn these things in your schools and colleges, it is futile to send you to them. A mere paper degree is of no use. In my opinion our standards have fallen so low that the examination papers ought to be more difficult and stricter. In my opinion no one should be passed unless he maintains a very high standard. I am tired of third and fourth-

rate people. A country cannot progress by merely raising slogans. A country progresses when its citizens are trained and skilled and have first-rate minds. That is the true test of a nation's ability.

So you have to ensure two things. One is, how many first-rate people we have in this country. You must remember that first-rate people are very few in number, whatever field you may consider. A first-rate man does not mean one who can make speeches in the Assembly or Parliament. It is not a bad thing to be an MLA or an MP because they are of all sorts, both good and bad. But it is obvious that the fact that an individual has been elected does not necessarily mean that he is capable. We have to put up with these things because they are part of the democratic system. But a really first-rate individual can only be one who belongs to some profession, whether he is a first-rate doctor or engineer or military officer, scientist, carpenter, ironsmith or artist. Today's world depends on its skilled men. Secondly, we must see what the average people are like because they are the ones who do the thousands of jobs in the country. The better the average quality of the people, the higher will be the standard of the country. Laws cannot help very much. Suppose we have to run a hundred yards race. You will find very few people who can run that distance in ten seconds. There are athletes who can do it in eleven or twelve seconds. The question is how many people there are in India who can run hundred yards in ten seconds. You can judge everything similarly, in politics as well as other things. Merely making a noise will not help.

So when I see indiscipline rampant among students, I cannot feel happy about them. They are wasting their time and opportunities instead of acquiring the necessary skills or training their minds. It is possible that they may get some small jobs through recommendations, but they cannot go very far. They are not among the responsible individuals who can achieve something.

I would like to tell you one thing more. All this that I have said so far does not concern the students alone. By a strange coincidence my contacts have increased with Indian students who have gone abroad. I met them in the United States and UK, and France and I keep in touch. I too was a student abroad once upon a time. In those days, only boys with rich parents could go abroad and they were not usually the really bright ones. They would go abroad and usually waste their father's money. Very few did good work. Most of them became barristers without too much work. Nowadays it has become a little more difficult. In those days it was impossible for even the most useless student to fail. I am telling you of my own days. Nowadays, students are going abroad in their thousands, to England and the United States and they are absolutely first rate. I hope that they will come back and do good work in their chosen professions. Whereas earlier students would go from here to become barristers, now very few of the four to five thousand Indians are studying to become barristers and the rest become engineers or doctors or

work in other technical fields. So it is a good thing and the future of India looks very bright to me when our students shall return to serve the country.

Well, I have taken up a great deal of your time in putting some of my thoughts before you. My mind is always full of my responsibilities and worries. You have heard about the AICC meeting which is going to be held in Bangalore.¹³ It was fixed to some extent on my recommendation because I wanted that apart from our ordinary sittings and resolutions, a special meeting should be called to consider the situation in the country. We have to understand the basic problems and weaknesses in the Congress so that we can do something about them. It is very essential and should be done often. Our politics is also going wrong in some ways in the sense that instead of the important problems being discussed openly in the AICC or in the annual session of the Congress, it has become a cloak and dagger politics. Some members get together quietly and decide things among themselves instead of an open debate and full discussion and coming to a decision by democratic methods. So in this forthcoming session of the AICC many basic problems of the country are going to be presented and I hope that the Members will consider them carefully. I would have liked to have held a full session of the Congress after that because the problems are very important. They could be discussed in the Congress and outside so that a firm line of action can be drawn up with the help of the people. All these things will be done by the AICC. But the AICC is not a thing apart. If it has the strength it can show the way to the people. Therefore you should consider all these problems carefully and we must arrive at decisions after mutual consultations, and then follow the path thus chosen together. *Jai Hind*.

13. The AICC met at Bangalore from 13 to 15 July 1951.

5. To Sri Krishna Sinha¹

New Delhi

June 23, 1951

My dear Sri Babu,²

There are some reports afloat in Delhi that there are likely to be unfair and improper deals with some zamindars in Bihar after the passing of the recent

1. JN Collection.

2. He was at this time Chief Minister of Bihar.

act.³ I am sure these reports must be incorrect. But I pass them on to you so that you might keep an eye on this matter. This business of taking over zamindaris involves much vested interests and there is plenty of room for corrupt practices, unless very great care is taken. Apart from corrupt practices, there may be attempts at favouritism and partiality or the reverse. All this has to be scrupulously avoided. There are hundreds of people closely watching every step taken by us. I wonder if it is possible to devise some independent machinery of a high order to prevent any abuse from occurring.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The Zamindari Abolition Act was passed as amended on 2 June 1951 by the Constitution Amendment Act.

BUILDING THE NATION**II. Food and Agriculture****(i) The Food Crisis**

1. To B.C. Roy¹

New Delhi
April 22, 1951

My dear Bidhan,

The news of the firing on the Cooch-Bihar hunger-marchers² is not only distressing but is very significant. This is going to have a very bad effect on us both in the country and abroad. It is all very well for us to say that there was Section 144 and there was a breach of this. But that is no excuse whatever when people are hungry and, as is reported, rice was selling at Rs 60/- a maund in Cooch-Bihar. Obviously when a situation like this arises, something has to be done before a riot occurs. What did the Magistrate do about it to meet this bad situation?

I am afraid the consequences of this are going to be far-reaching. I think that, in any event, an enquiry should be held and this should be announced as soon as possible. Also that food should be sent there forthwith.

Yours,
Jawahar

1. JN Collection.
2. The demonstrators demanding extension of food rationing and protesting against food shortages and rise in prices were lathi-charged and fired upon on 21 April, causing some deaths and injuries to many including the policemen. On the next day the troops were called out when an angry crowd attacked the house of the district superintendent of police demanding action against the policemen responsible for firing on the previous day. On 23 April, a general strike and mass demonstrations were held.

2. Telegram to B.C. Roy¹

Cooch-Bihar developments have created powerful impression in Parliament and, I have no doubt, in the country as a whole. There was an adjournment motion in House today when Home Minister promised to supply full information as soon as received. Will you therefore please send us this full information both as to law and order position and food position and what steps are being taken to send food there? Also an accurate account of incidents and causes that led to firing and present situation arising out of it. An early reply is requested.

1. New Delhi, 23 April 1951. JN Collection.

3. Telegram to Chief Ministers¹

I am addressing you to draw your particular attention to the exceedingly grave food situation in the country. We have discussed this often and tried to adjust conflicting claims and interests. But the time has now come when we face the possibilities of tragedy on a vast scale and we have to think afresh and tackle this problem with all our might to avert this tragedy which, apart from the human sorrow and misery, can only bring shame and humiliation on us and at the same time perhaps shake the whole structure of the State. No part of India can escape the consequences of such a disaster in another part.

We have lived in some expectation of a large supply of foodgrains coming from America. In our difficulty we have remained silent even when taunts and bitter criticisms have been thrown at us and while people starve here, long arguments continue in the American Congress and all kinds of conditions are discussed which no proud and self-respecting country would like to submit to. I do not know what the final outcome of all this will be. But it seems doubtful if any foodgrains in adequate quantity will come in time from the United States or if the conditions attached to them will be acceptable to us. We are trying our best to get supplies from other countries and we hope some will no doubt come. But in the final analysis we have been largely thrown on our own resources and if we are to maintain our freedom and our self-respect, we will have to find some way out largely through our own resources. That means that we must pool these resources for the common benefit at whatever sacrifice that this may involve. The time for long argument is past.

Reports reach us of starvation and famine in large parts of the country. Reports also reach us of a bumper harvest in some other parts and even of the carry over of foodgrains from last year's stock. Our sample surveys in various parts of India also confirm that there are considerable stocks available in many places. This surely is a contradiction which we must resolve. Failure to do so means the failure not only of our political but our economic system, apart from the shame that this brings upon all of us.

I would therefore earnestly request you to consider this matter from this point of view of imminent and dangerous crisis so that, whatever the cost, we find a way out by mutual cooperation.

We are likely to meet here early next month. I hope that we shall then come to final conclusions which will give a lead to the country to face this crisis.

1. New Delhi, 24 April 1951. File No 31(90)/50-PMS.



AT A WOMEN'S GATHERING AT BULANDSHAHR, 29 APRIL 1951



INAUGURATING THE DIGGING OF A CANAL AT HAZRATPUR VILLAGE,
BULANDSHAHR DISTRICT, 29 APRIL 1951

4. Fighting Famine¹

The problem of food which has become most vital and pressing to the country's freedom and future will be treated on a war basis.

We have to fight this battle of famine which is trying to raise its horrible spectre in Bihar and Madras. I am confident that we will win this battle.

India is not so down and out as to accept any condition dictated by any foreign country in the matter of importing food that sullies our honour. If India shows complete helplessness at this hour and becomes dependent on the charity of an outside power, she will lose her freedom.

We have to make tremendous countrywide efforts to meet this rising spectre of famine and even if we have to help our brethren in Bihar and Madras by ourselves foregoing food, we will do so.

What face shall I show to my people, and what face will India show to the world if people were to die of famine in this country?

Three days ago our army made a spontaneous offer of help in distributing food in Bihar. I was happy to get this offer. It lifted me up. Our army is an army of the people and not only has it to defend the country in the event of an attack from outside but also does so in times of any danger that may threaten the country from within.

I am tired of these resolutions passed by various Congress committees. They have become a stereotyped affair. How I wish the UPCC at its meeting had passed only one resolution calling upon the people in the State to help procure more food from surplus areas for distribution in the famine-threatened areas of Bihar and Madras.

India's primary need today is food and it is also our biggest source of worry. If we are able to solve it our stock will go up in the counsels of the world. Why should we extend our hand to any country for food especially when we have to pocket taunting remarks from some foreign quarters in this regard? Therefore I wish to state that India has sufficient capacity to bear this new burden.

It becomes the duty of every Indian, to whichever political party he may belong, to extend his unstinted support to the Government in meeting the challenge in this hour of national crisis.

Some States are not doing what they should in meeting the spectre of famine. From some of them the response to the Centre's appeal for food had been good. But there are some States which have not made an all-out effort

1. Address at a public meeting, Bulandshahr, 29 April 1951. From the *National Herald*, 30 April 1951.

to procure as much as they could. I am surprised that the States have not realised the sense of urgency and deep crisis through which the nation is passing. Our people have not somehow realised the seriousness of the crisis. I am not saying all this to frighten the people or to create a feeling of panic among them. I am only stressing what they should themselves have understood by now. You have to realise every waking moment of your life India's present urgency.

We can only face this threat of famine through full cooperation of the people. The Government by itself cannot solve the problem, although it is trying to get food from whichever quarter it can. The real grit of the people is put to test in times of common danger. Difficulties and calamities help in steeling the people's hearts. So today when this calamity threatens to engulf our land, people have to rise as one man in meeting it. I do not know why so far they have been just looking on unmindful of this threat and doing nothing about it.

It is a strange thing in human nature that some people try to benefit from the misfortunes of others. The Government will not tolerate such elements. If they try to make profit through hoarding food or by profiteering in it, they would be endangering the country's freedom. They may take shelter behind some clauses of the Constitution and brazenfacedly say that they have the freedom to turn human misery and starvation into sources of profit. But if certain people behave in this way the whole nation would rise against them. The people would not only wipe them out but also the Constitution under whose shelter they tried to live on human misery.

India has recently obtained forty lakh tons of foodgrains from other countries. Twenty lakh tons more will soon be arriving. Certain things are being said about this food question which cannot be tolerated. I wish to give a fitting reply to such talk, but of course, it would not help to do so at the moment.

It is very disgraceful how students of Bulandshahr District had behaved recently when in Aligarh they allegedly killed a teacher who had caught them earlier copying in an examination.² I do not understand of what use is such education to India. I would prefer to close down all educational institutions which produce such students. After all I do not have to open a shop where degrees are bought and sold. This shameful conduct of students showed something drastically wrong with our educational institutions, if not all of them at least most of them.

2. The Principal of Barahseni College, Aligarh, died on 7 April 1951 as a result of injuries sustained in an assault by some students whom he had expelled for using unfair means in the examination hall.

A case against the students who are alleged to have killed the teacher shall be started, but something has to be done to improve the tone of education in the country.

5. The War against Famine¹

Friends and Comrades,

I am going to speak to you about the food situation in our country. What do those words convey to you? They might mean just some slight maladjustment which we should try to remedy or they might mean starvation and famine for large numbers of our countrymen. Let us try to understand objectively what exactly the situation is. On the one hand, we have exaggerated reports of famine conditions prevailing over wide areas and deaths by starvation. On the other hand, an attempt is made to minimise the gravity of the situation. The truth lies somewhere between the two and it is bad enough. There are in India today wide areas, more especially in the States of Bihar and Madras, where food is lacking and is supplied in insufficient quantities and hence there is continuous under-nourishment. Some, unable to bear this strain for long, weaken and collapse. A famine, as we have grown to understand this word often, does not exist, to any wide extent at this stage, but the spectre of famine certainly hovers over the land. What then are we going to do about it? We cannot look on while tragedy develops. We cannot live our everyday lives when starvation and deaths march with stealthy steps towards many of our people. There are many important and even vital problems confronting us, in the international and domestic spheres, but there is nothing more vital or of greater importance, today, than to meet this menace of famine. What are our great schemes worth if we cannot even save our people from that worst of fates, death by slow starvation? For the moment, it serves little purpose to spend our time in apportioning blame. We have to be up and doing to meet and counter this danger that confronts our people. Each one of us must realise, what is happening, and what is likely to happen. Each one of us must do his bit to prevent this happening. We have to face a very difficult situation and I do not want any one to minimise this difficulty. Nevertheless, I am convinced that we can face it successfully, if only we showed that awareness and a determination to do our utmost to crush this evil, which threatens to overwhelm us. Let us declare war on famine and all its brood. This is not a question of politics or economics on which there can be any difference of opinion. Only

1. Broadcast to the nation, New Delhi, 1 May 1951. AIR Tapes, NMML.

the small in mind can try to take advantage or worse still try to aggravate this situation for political purposes. If we cannot pull together in this matter, then indeed, we are men and women of petty stature, we cannot rise to any occasion or any crisis.

We have tried our utmost to procure foodgrains from distant countries. We have purchased them to the utmost of our capacity and ship after ship is coming in, laden with this precious commodity, and yet this is not enough, and we have tried and are trying to get more.

I should like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the many countries which have helped in this matter. To the United States of America,² which has the good fortune to have abundant supplies, and which has also provided us with ships for transport, to China, which in spite of her own need had already sent us several shiploads and which is going to send us more. To Soviet Russia, which I hope will also be sending us wheat before long.³ I should also like to express my appreciation of the help given to us by the Government of the United Kingdom in securing ships, which we so badly need.⁴

Above all, I should like to express my deep gratitude to innumerable individuals in various countries, to the common man everywhere, for not only his sympathy at our misfortune, but his desire to help to the best of his ability. In the United States of America, a non-official emergency committee, formed for this purpose, has done excellent work. While we welcome all the help that we can get from foreign countries, we have made it clear that such help must not have any political strings attached to it, any conditions which are unbecoming for a self-respecting nation to accept, any pressure to change our domestic or international policy.

We would be unworthy of the high responsibilities with which we have been charged if we bartered away in the slightest degree, our country's self-respect of freedom of action, even for something which we need so badly. I shall not deal here with the wider and more basic problems of food in India, although that must be understood by us in all its implications, nor will I say much at this stage, about the intimate connection of the food problem with that of the growth of population both of human beings and animals. It is clear to me that we cannot ultimately tackle the food problem by itself, ignoring these other factors. We have sought help from abroad as per our needs we must, and we shall continue to do so under pressure of necessity. But the

2. The USA had supplied 429,000 tons of milo at a very concessional rate and 750,000 tons of wheat, had diverted to India another 50,000 tons of wheat originally intended for Italy under the Marshall Plan, and had released 13 ships for the transport of grain.
3. See *post*, pp. 76-77.
4. By 7 April 1951, the British Government had loaned to India 42,000 tons of wheat, in addition to a number of ships.

conviction has grown upon me, more forcibly than ever, how dangerous it is for us to depend on this primary necessity for life on foreign countries. We can never function with the freedom that we desire if we are always dependent in this matter on others. It is only when we obtain self-sufficiency in food, that we can progress and develop our policies. Otherwise, there is the continuous pressure of circumstance, there is trouble and misery and there is sometimes shame and humiliation.

We have large areas in India today, which are deficit in food and some of which hover on the verge of famine, and yet there are also other parts of India which produce a surplus of foodgrains. Taking India as a whole the deficit is not so great as is imagined. We can only meet this crisis by pooling all our resources and using them to the best advantage all over India. It would be shameful for all of us, if some people die of lack of food, while others have an abundance of it, if some of our States have to face widespread under-nourishment and starvation, while others have a surplus; there is a heavy responsibility at this moment on those States or areas, which are described as surplus. For it is to them that we must look to supply the need of those who lack food. We cannot think any more in the narrow terms of our own particular State and ignore the organised call from a sister State. We have to realise that whatever help may or may not come from abroad the burden and the responsibility rest upon all of us, and if any part of India goes down, we go down with it. In this, as in other matters, India is one, and we must function therefore, as a united whole. Two days ago, I visited the district of Bulandshahr in Uttar Pradesh.⁵ From the point of view of food, it is relatively more fortunate. When I told the people there, of the sufferings of their brothers and sisters in Bihar or in far off Madras, they were moved and immediately without my asking for it, many offered their help and their gifts. This spontaneous gesture affected me deeply, and I realised that if only our people knew what the facts were they would come to the rescue even at a sacrifice for themselves.

The immediate need is the procurement of foodgrains. This has to be pushed to the utmost extent. There may be gifts and we shall welcome them, but ultimately it is the amount of foodgrains that we procure, that will make a difference. If this is so, then it becomes of essential importance for all of us to work our hardest to procure more than we have ever done in the past. This becomes the duty of our administration, and of the trader, and of the farmer and the peasants in the field. At this moment for any person to hoard or to speculate on food is a crime and a disgrace. If we think too much of our tomorrows and the day after, what of those who may see no tomorrow. I have learnt with surprise and distress, that some people are coming in the way of procurement and are actually preaching against it. If they think that the manner

5. Nehru visited Bulandshahr on 29 April 1951. See *ante*, pp. 37-39.

or method of procurement is not right, they have every justification for trying to rectify it or to improve it, but to say or do anything which hinders procurement, is to invite famine and death for our people. Procurement, therefore, must have the first place. The new wheat is coming in, and it is our good fortune that the crop has been on the whole a good one. Let us make the best of it and pour out this life-giving substance to those, from whom life might be ebbing away. Let us function with efficiency and integrity and not allow either our self-interest or greed for profit or the red tape of official machinery to come in the way of speedy and adequate relief. What else can we do? Perhaps you know that our army has offered its services for any help that it can give in the distribution of food or otherwise. We welcomed that offer, because our army is efficient and disciplined and I am sure the help they give will be valuable. I welcome it even more, because I should like our army to be not only the brave defenders of our freedom from external aggression, but also efficient servants of the people who can always be called upon in time of need. The army and the people are one and they must help each other.

In some of the areas that have been badly affected notably in Bihar and parts of Madras, unemployment has grown and purchasing power is vanishing. So even though foodgrains are available, there is no money to buy them. In these areas, it is important and urgent to start public works to give relief and some purchasing power. These public works can be of many kinds; primarily they should concern themselves with growing more food wherever this is possible, or any other kind of works of permanent value. Wells can be made, village tanks can be dug and cleaned, roads can be constructed. There must be many young men including students in our colleges and universities, as well as in the higher classes of secondary schools, for whom such labour should be welcome, both from the national and the individual points of view. Personally, I have long been convinced that our educational process is incomplete, unless a student has put in manual labour of some kind, and I hope that the time may come when a course of such labour should be made an essential part of school and college education, without which no degree or diploma can be given. ...We have large schemes of grow more food, run under official auspices. Let the people start their small schemes on their own initiative and grow food wherever they can manage to do so on uncultivated land in rural areas, parks, gardens, compounds of public institutions and private residents. In any organised schemes for procurement or distribution, governmental agencies must necessarily function. But that is not enough, and it should be supplemented by private agency in a hundred ways. I suggest that each village should form a small committee of its own, whose function it should be to help every person in that village. That committee should assume responsibility for the village, and those who lack food should be supported by

those who have a little surplus. Of course, where necessary, official help will be given. But the village should function as a cooperative unit in this matter, and the committee should also see to it that there is no hoarding by any one in that village. I am sure that our people, as soon as they realise the nature of the crisis, will cooperate in this common endeavour and not seek private profit out of their neighbour's misfortune. If any still continued to hoard, then the committee should bring this matter to public notice....

When we are seeking to make the most of every ounce of foodgrains that we have, can there be greater folly if not worse than waste? We are a people whose social habits have encouraged waste. These must be considered as an offence against common decency and must be stopped. May I suggest also that each one of us should demonstrate active sympathy and desire to help by giving up one meal a week. This is no sacrifice for anyone. Let the foodgrains so saved be collected and sent as gifts in the manner I have suggested above. If this is done in any adequate measure as it should be, then we have conquered and survived this food crisis.

I have ventured to place before you certain suggestions for action. I want you to have not only an intellectual appreciation of the situation in India, but also an emotional awareness of the tragedy that fast approaches us. I want you to look upon it as something intimately affecting you and not some distant occurrence, with which you have little concern. I want you above all to think of our common Mother India whose children we are, of her honour and self-respect and of her distress at the agony of many of her children. Let us put all our resources, all our strength and energy in this war against famine, which we must and will win. *Jai Hind*.

6. On the Food Crisis¹

In the course of my broadcast on food last evening, I made various suggestions.² I shall be glad if you will give thought to these suggestions and advise as to how they should be carried out in practice. I should like full directions to be sent to State Governments about them, indeed to all District Magistrates. I should also like to address non-official organisations such as the All India Women's Conference. Also Universities.

Regarding my suggestion to miss a meal a week and giving the foodgrains so saved as a gift, this has to be worked out and some arrangements suggested. More than a year ago I suggested that people should refrain from eating rice

1. Note to Food Secretary, Ministry of Food, New Delhi, 2 May 1951. File No 31(125)/51-PMS. Extracts.
2. See the preceding item.

and should collect it for sending to special areas in need of it. A considerable collection was made in Delhi, but nobody knew what to do with it. The Rationing Officers refused to take it because this got mixed up with the other foodgrains they had. This was free and hence the confusion. In Kanpur, I was told that 10,000 maunds of rice were collected and rotted away for some time.

It is necessary, therefore, that full directions should be given now. First of all, this is a gift which is meant to be distributed free in famine or near famine areas. Therefore there is no question of this getting mixed up with normal procurement or with the food meant for rations.

The first thing to be done is to collect it. This should be left entirely to the non-official agency. The District Magistrate in each District (or any other suitable officer) might be put in charge of all such collections in his area. He will then send it to the particular areas which need it most. Directions about these areas should be sent by the Food Ministry. It is better to concentrate on some specific areas, which are badly affected, than to spread it out all over India. The badly affected areas would be in Bihar and Madras. In sending these foodgrains, care should be taken that they go to the nearest place which is in need of them, that is to say collections made near Madras should go there. Those in the North should go to Bihar. Normally adequate quantities should be sent to lessen expenditure on transport.

From a surplus area it would be easy to send it direct. But if collections are made in a deficit area or where food is imported (as in large towns), it would be unnecessary and wasteful to send these foodgrains to another area. In such cases they should be bought up and left in that particular area. The price should be credited for relief purposes in the famine areas where food could be bought on the spot....

7. To Chief Ministers¹

New Delhi

May 19, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

In regard to the food situation, I would suggest to you that you should yourself take charge of your food portfolio. In spite of the fact that food is our most important question, it is often dealt with in the States as if it was a secondary portfolio. I think you should make people feel that you are giving it first importance.

1. This letter is also printed in G. Parthasarathi(ed), *Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-1964*, Vol 2 (New Delhi, 1986), p. 399.

Another matter which might be looked into very soon is that your Government should keep the godowns and storage places for foodgrains in good order, and, if necessary, spend some money on this. There is much wastage because of bad storage.

I should like you to examine the feasibility of setting up special summary courts for trial of blackmarketeers and hoarders, etc. The only point of arresting these people is to try them quickly. It is neither fair to them nor to Government to keep them as undertrials for long.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To Sri Krishna Sinha¹

New Delhi
May 25, 1951

My dear Sri Babu,

Thank you for your letter of the 23rd May.

I am very happy to learn of the improvement in the food situation and I congratulate you, your Government and your administration on the efficient way that you are tackling it. You can rest assured that you will get every help from the Central Government. I think there is little doubt that adequate quantities of food will flow into Bihar during the next few months. We must remain vigilant. The only danger is a feeling of complacency. This state of vigilance must be continued till the next year's spring season at least. To face and conquer a great difficulty and to avert impending disaster, strengthens a nation more than anything else.

What I am most concerned with is the provision of public works which will provide purchasing power to the people. I am glad that you are emphasising this. I hope that the greatest possible attention will be paid to this matter.

You should encourage newspapermen to come and see the work you are doing, both foreign and Indian journalists. I am glad you have already done this.

You write to me about improvements that might be made in Nepal. I entirely agree with you, but I fear that little can be done in Nepal for sometime because of difficulties. However I am conveying your ideas on this subject to our Ambassador in Nepal.²

1. File No 31(103)/50-PMS.

2. C.P.N. Singh.

I am thinking of going to Kathmandu for two or three days on the 16th of June.³ If possible, I should like to spend a day in Patna on my return. This will enable me to meet you and others to discuss the food situation as well as other matters. Probably I shall be able to come to Patna on the 19th, but I am not sure yet.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Nehru reached Kathmandu on 15 June and on return came to Patna on 19 and was back in Delhi on 21 June.

9. To Chief Ministers¹

New Delhi
May 26, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

I am sending you with this letter a brief report prepared by a batch of investigators sent by the Delhi School of Economics to Bihar.² This is only a summary of their full report³ which has not been issued yet. Parts of this summary have appeared in the Press and you may have seen them. I am sending it to you, however, because I feel that you will be interested in this objective and impartial survey by competent observers.⁴

From this report two facts stand out. Firstly, that owing to a succession of events, including natural disasters as well as some delay on the part of Government in the early stages to deal with the situation effectively, there was rapid deterioration and a very grave crisis, involving disaster for millions, appeared to be imminent. Secondly, that the Government of India and the Government of Bihar took, at a somewhat later stage, effective steps to meet this crisis, and in fact controlled the situation. The threatened disaster has not

1. This letter is also printed in G. Parthasarathi (ed), *Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-1964*, Vol 2 (New Delhi, 1986), 400-402.
2. A team of six investigators started their survey in north Bihar on 23 April and completed it by 5 May 1951.
3. Not printed.
4. The team visited thirty five villages in Saran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Purnea Districts and met landless labourers, cultivators and prominent non-officials. It found that while serious scarcity conditions prevailed in north Bihar these had been tackled effectively by the Central and Bihar Governments. The people also had shown "tremendous forbearance despite their lack of purchasing power". The team however felt that the public works started by the State Government were "not sufficient" to solve the problem.

only been averted but there is a good deal of hope that nothing untoward on big scale will occur. The report pays handsome tribute to the Government of India and the Government of Bihar in this respect. In particular, it mentions the railway authorities who have helped, with speed and efficiency in transporting foodgrains in very large quantities to Bihar. The report tells us that the whole of the Bihar Government has been geared up for the purpose of meeting this food crisis and most of its officials are "food conscious". A tribute is paid to the Bihar peasant who has suffered so greatly and has lived on the brink of disaster and yet who has not lost his dignity or equanimity. I should like to add my own tribute to the peasantry of Bihar, who have shown in this grave crisis the stuff they are made of.

We have sent vast quantities of foodgrains to Bihar during the last two or three months. We propose to continue doing so during the next few critical months and even later. Our object is not merely to tide over the present crisis, but to lay some secure foundation for the future. The crisis is not passed and will not pass merely because we send enough foodgrains. Therefore, we have to be vigilant and watchful all the time and strive to the utmost of our ability to remove the deeper causes. What has been done thus far gives us hope and confidence and the conviction that we can overcome these major difficulties. As it is, prices of foodgrains are falling in Bihar and I think that this tendency will continue.

The real problem in Bihar today is not the lack of foodgrains but the lack of purchasing power among large sections of the people. This can only be made good by large-scale public works, and I am glad to find that the Bihar Government is paying due attention to this. This should form the true basis of recovery.

Then also we have to give free food to those people who cannot afford to purchase it. In this connection, I made an appeal for gifts of free foodgrains by voluntary contributions and missing a meal a week, etc.⁵ The response has been satisfactory, but we have no figures to judge what it is and what is being done. I think this should be encouraged. But, in doing so, we must not allow unauthorized people to exploit the situation. Instructions have been issued⁶ that all such gifts of foodgrains should go to the District Magistrate of the district concerned, who will forward them to the affected areas in Bihar or Madras, whichever is considered more convenient. It is for the provincial Government to keep in touch with these collections and movements, and to report to us. But, in order to save time and keep us fully informed, I suggest that each District Magistrate might send a copy of his report to provincial

5. See *ante*, p. 43.

6. On 11 May 1951.

Headquarters to the Food Ministry here. We shall then have early information of what is being done.

I have referred to Bihar specially because Bihar has presented us with the gravest problem. But there are other areas in India, notably in Madras, in some of the eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh, and elsewhere, where the situation has also been critical. The same approach applies to all these areas. Indeed, in dealing with the situation we must keep the whole of India in view all the time and not forget one part of it by thinking solely of another part.

Any moneys collected for Bihar relief should be sent to me to be credited to a special fund that I have opened for food relief in any part of India. We can buy food with this money and send it wherever it may be needed. It will, of course, be unwise actually to send gifts of food from one scarcity area to another.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To V.K. Krishna Menon¹

New Delhi
May 27, 1951

My dear Krishna,

In the *New Statesman and Nation* of May 19th, the first paragraph of the London Diary at page 553 refers to the food situation in India. It says: "In any case, it is calculated that about a million people will die of starvation in Bihar and Madras."

It is open to the writer to express any opinion on this subject. But such a precise calculation has no relation to facts. I can say with complete confidence that nothing of the kind is going to happen to Bihar and Madras. I cannot guarantee, of course, that a few odd persons may not die of starvation or from continued under-nourishment. But there is going to be no famine leading to large-scale deaths in any part of India. We have filled Bihar with food and continue and intend to continue doing so. The Bihar Government has also taken fairly effective measures for public works to increase the purchasing power of the people. Therefore, what the *New Statesman* says is very very far from the truth.

We have also taken trouble to stock food in isolated parts which may not be easily accessible during the monsoon. There is no question, therefore, of these isolated parts suffering during this period.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML.

It is very likely that food will come from America. If that comes, the situation will, of course, ease very greatly, and we shall not only meet the difficulties of this year, but carry on to the next with a substantial surplus. But if by any mischance this additional food does not come from the United States, even then we shall avoid a major catastrophe and I hope we shall just pull through, though with difficulty.

Further on in the *New Statesman* London Diary it is stated "that the great hydro-electric works which were promised by the Congress are still at a standstill, and that the great fertilizer plant of Sindri, which was to go so far to raise the standard of living of the peasants, is the subject of a continuing scandal." This again is almost completely untrue. Great progress has been made in the hydro-electric works of Bhakra Nangal, Damodar Valley and Hirakud in Orissa. Indeed, every competent observer, who has come here from abroad, including American engineers and the like, has expressed his satisfaction at this progress. It is true that we have been unable to take up some other major hydro-electric works which we had in mind; we have concentrated on a number of minor ones.²

About the Sindri fertilizer plant, there is no doubt that there was obviously great delay and loss was caused. For this the responsibility is very largely of the Government which preceded us. Even after we came, there was delay. But the Fertilizer plant there has now made great progress and is a very impressive undertaking, as all competent observers say. To talk of its being a continuing scandal is therefore completely wrong.

Further, the London Diary goes on to say: "How far the allegations are true I have no means of knowing, but my Indian as well as British friends agree that corruption has now reached appalling dimensions in India. This monumental graft...." It is hardly right for such sweeping statements to be made and then merely, to qualify them by saying that the writer has no means of knowing how far they are true. I think they are not true in the main. Undoubtedly there is graft and undoubtedly there is corruption. But I think definitely that there is far less of it than people talk about or imagine and, secondly, that it is less than it was. Public opinion in India is very sensitive and vigilant about this matter and a number of journals, like *Blitz* etc, are continually giving false accounts.

I am drawing your attention to this matter because I was pained to read this paragraph in the *New Statesman*. It is clear that the Editor relies on some very dubious sources of information, in this and perhaps other matters, and

2. In 1951, apart from the major projects like Bhakra Nangal, Damodar (Bihar and West Bengal), Hirakud (Orissa), minor projects such as Kosi (Nepal and Bihar), Tikarpara and Niraj (Orissa), Narmada, Tapti and Sabarmati (Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh) and Dihang and Manas (Assam) were at different stages of construction.

these sources probably include some Britishers here who have no love for India or for the present Government.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

11. To P.S. Kumaraswami Raja¹

New Delhi
June 1, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

We have been paying a great deal of attention to the Bihar situation. This of course does not mean that we are in the least ignoring Madras and I have tried to keep in touch, through our Food Ministry, with the food situation in Madras. So far as the actual foodgrains are concerned, I have no doubt that you will get an adequate quantity.

What I am concerned with, however, is the growing lack of purchasing power of large numbers of our people. It is not much good our giving food when they cannot buy it even at the controlled price. The only thing to do in the circumstances is to have public works and occasionally even to give doles to those who are in need of them, although I dislike doles. Bihar is doing well in regard to public works.

I hope that your Government has also given thought to public works and is making arrangements for them. You will probably receive some of the gift foodgrains for free distribution.

I am sending a cheque for Rs 25,000/- to be used at your discretion for free food distribution.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No 31(125)/51-PMS.

12. To Chief Ministers¹

New Delhi
June 8, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

I wrote to you a few days ago suggesting that the food portfolio in your State

1. This letter is also printed in G. Parthasarathi (ed), *Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-1964*, Vol 2 (New Delhi, 1986), p. 415.

might be taken over by you.² I am afraid I did not make myself quite clear. I did not wish to upset any arrangement³ that was working satisfactorily. What I was anxious to point out was that the food problem must be given the highest priority, and, as a measure of this, I suggested that the Chief Ministers should take charge of it. Of course, where present arrangements are satisfactory and food is being given this priority, then no change need be made. Even so, I would suggest that the Chief Minister might keep in personal touch with the food portfolio.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See *ante*, pp. 44-45.

3. Reacting to Nehru's suggestion, B.G. Kher, Chief Minister of Bombay, said on 4 June that he was already "overburdened" with work and was not keen to take over the food portfolio because "food is a complicated subject and requires special knowledge."

13. The Food Situation¹

...Jawaharlal Nehru: I noted down some figures which might interest you. First of all, there is no doubt that there is considerable improvement in the food situation though it continues to be difficult and will continue to be difficult and require ceaseless vigilance.

The improvement is coming very largely because of the considerable supplies coming from outside. A very slight improvement has also taken place, rather slight, because of some rains here and there, but that is not important. The real improvement is that we have large supplies from various countries which we have purchased and which we have pushed to all parts of the country, more especially to Bihar. Bihar is getting at the rate of 105,000 tons of foodgrains per month, which is really more than their normal consumption, and as a result of this, there has been—you might have noticed—a fall in prices in Bihar. It is a very healthy sign if in a place like Bihar prices tend to fall.

Question: Do you refer to black market prices?

JN: Yes, black market prices or free-market prices, because the others are controlled prices. The problem is two-fold. One is the actual supply of foodgrains and the other is to provide purchasing power to the people to buy the foodgrains. In a sense, we have controlled the first part of the problem of

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 11 June 1951. PIB. Extracts. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 247-248, 323-325, 394-397, 433-434, 446, 450-452, 462-463, 470, 487-488, 525-526.

supplying foodgrains. When I say that, I am relying of course also on the foodgrains I am expecting to get—not only what we have got but also what we are expecting in the next few months. If they come according to schedule as we hope they will, then we shall be in a position to continue to supply continuously. I might tell you that there are certain parts in India—in Bihar, in Bengal, in Bombay, (Ratnagiri District) etc, which get cut off in the monsoon. We cannot reach them during the monsoon. So we have taken care to stock them for the monsoon period. Others can be reached later, these might not be. So we have to deal with them in that way. Now, if supplies continue to come as I expect and as planned for—in these supplies I include what we hope to get from the United States, they are included in our calculations—then the supply position will be a healthy one, and we will go on supplying. Remember that in supplying to these places, vast quantities of foodgrains are continuously in the so-called pipeline. One has to remember that fact. Our difficulty in the past has been, as Mr Munshi graphically said, we have been living from ship to mouth. We want to get over that position of not knowing what the tomorrow or the day after will or will not bring. We want these pipelines to be filled. If we can build up a little carryover, well and good.

Then the other part ie, regarding the purchasing power. All provinces to some extent have tackled this problem but Bihar which was the worst affected by it, has tackled it most of all by large-scale public works, large numbers of them, big, middling, small, etc. I will give you some figures for Bihar. In Bihar, six thousand four hundred ninety fair price shops are functioning, serving a total population of one hundred thirty five lakhs, ie, thirteen and a half millions. The off-take from the fair price shops is steadily going up. In the last week of May, the total off-take from Government shops amounted to 23,000 tons as against 15,000 tons previously. Of these fair price shops, over five thousand one hundred are in the rural areas. The present monthly rate of consumption of foodgrains in Bihar is about 68,000 tons. We expect this to go up during the next two months. The number of people served under the Government distribution scheme is rapidly increasing, and the Bihar Government is aiming at serving in this way fifteen to twenty million people.

As regards public works, as far as possible, works of permanent value and of a productive nature have been taken up. Fifty irrigation projects are in progress at a cost of about three crores of rupees. These do not include projects of large-scale sinking of tube-wells in North and South Bihar. In addition, there are eighty smaller irrigation projects costing approximately Rs two thousand each; also five thousand wells and nearly seven thousand and five hundred minor irrigation works. In addition, works on national highways, State highways, district roads, etc, are also going on. Further many other projects at a total cost of one crore and four lakhs have been sanctioned. Also certain

special kinds of works have been undertaken involving light manual labour for those who cannot work on roads, etc. Free relief on a liberal scale is also being given. For middle class cultivators, there is a scheme for providing loans and it is proposed to distribute two and a half crores of rupees in this manner. Thus, it is calculated that about eleven and a half crores of rupees will be spent in the near future in various ways, and these will provide purchasing power to the people. The Bihar Government is prepared to add to these works as and when necessary. Priority is of course being given to the projects in the scarcity areas. In addition to these, medical and public health relief has been provided for and Rs ten lakhs have been sanctioned for that. There has been talk often enough of facing the food issue as a war-time crisis, and it can be said that the Bihar Government has been functioning recently in that way and they have been turning all their energy and all the resources of their Government machinery towards meeting this great food crisis....

Q: When it is said that the food situation has improved do you still need the food from the US?

JN: When we say that that the food situation has improved we take into account the food which we expect from US. If it does not come, then we have to think of some other sources.

Q: There is a large-scale movement of people in Madras from the southern districts to the cities in view of the abolition of rural rationing and very high prices of foodgrains. Are you doing anything, Sir, in this connection?

JN: I have no such information. I should doubt any large-scale movement like this.

Q: The Madras Food Minister himself admitted it. Owing to the shortage of yarn the weavers are not able to purchase food at all.

JN: The only way to help them is to give them yarn or food or both.

Q: In view of the food situation do you still hold to the self-sufficiency programme by 1952?²

JN: An important question has been raised: "In view of the food situation do you still hold to the self-sufficiency programme by next year." I do not think

2. The crisis arising from the natural disasters of 1950 compelled the Government to modify its programme, initially adopted in March 1949, for the attainment of self-sufficiency in food production by 31 December 1951. It was decided in July 1950 to advance the final date for the attainment of this object to 31 March 1952, after which food would be imported only to meet any grave emergency, to build up a central reserve, and for replacement due to diversion of crops in the national interest.

that the present food situation need come in the way of that objective of self-sufficiency. What was that objective of self-sufficiency? It was that we should produce our normal requirements of food. But if any catastrophe occurs, any natural disaster occurs, then only we shall have to import food. That is, in a normal year we should be able to have enough. That is the objective aimed at. Now the present situation has been a very bad thing. Owing to the successive disasters it has upset all our calculations. Once we get over it and the normal production we aim at, is attained, I do not think this matter will create any great difficulty. But there is another question which is more intricate, that is how far we can go ahead with our food production programme to keep pace with the growing population. We have however got not enough data. We are collecting data specially for that, to consider the situation from day to day from the point of view of basic facts in India—the population growth, the total production etc, how far we expect in the next year to increase food production for the growing population; how far they balance each other or are behind each other. But I cannot give you an immediate answer because it requires much closer and more scientific study of it.

Q: What particular country did you have in mind when you formulated this self-sufficiency programme? Did you have Russia, China or Britain in mind?

JN: I do not quite understand why we should have a model in mind. The problem essentially did not seem difficult. That is to say, either we can increase food production by bringing in more land under cultivation or by more intensive methods or both. Now, the average wheat yield here is nine maunds per acre which is ridiculously low. I will give you an instance. Of course, it does not do good to tell you that in my garden I produced thirty three maunds per acre, because that was very specially treated and manured and all that. Nobody can do that. But what is interesting is this. I wonder how many of you have heard about the Etawah project which the UP Government has been carrying on for the last three years.³ It was started under the guidance of an American engineer-planner⁴ with two or three other Americans to assist him but run chiefly by Indians whom they trained later. That project was not meant to increase food production as such. It was meant generally to raise community

3. Initiated on 15 September 1948 by the UP Government in Mahewa village, about 30 km east of Etawah city, the Etawah pilot project aimed at increasing the productivity of land through development of rural industries and cooperatives. It also sought to promote the mental and moral development of the people and involve them in self-government and panchayats.
4. Albert Mayer (1897-1981); architect and town planner, planning and development adviser to the UP Government, 1948-52.

living in that area of seventy or hundred villages—a fairly large area. They worked quietly without any fuss—worked not by being super-imposed, not by bringing big machinery and all that, not trying to make it a bit of America but rather tried to develop the village as it was with the help of the villagers, making them conscious of what they should do. The first year showed no apparent results; the second did but the third year has shown rather remarkable results, in many phases, but incidentally—almost accidentally you might say—the food situation in those villages has improved so much that the average of nine maunds per acre has become an average of twenty three maunds per acre—not in a specially treated area like my garden—but in a hundred villages. That is tremendous improvement achieved not by governmental machinery. It is extraordinarily interesting. Now this group of people have been given some hundred villages in the Gorakhpur District and the UP Government want to extend this on a large scale. This is more interesting really than all the big and rather flashy schemes that you hear about. In Madhya Bharat thousands and thousands of acres are being treated to remove *kans* grass. Huge tractors are put in use converting the land into enormous State farms. That will produce a large quantity of foodgrains. It may become almost the granary for India. Then you have the Terai scheme and the river valley schemes. These are schemes to bring additional land under cultivation and to bring water for irrigation which is chiefly lacking. But what is really interesting is having the land as it is without any major irrigation scheme, without any major machine or anything coming in, but having the land as it is with better advice, better cooperation, and better management, and increasing the yield by over hundred per cent. It is tremendous. Therefore there seems to be no difficulty at all except the difficulty of training and the human factor to our having entire self-sufficiency of food in this country.

Q: You have given us a very cautious survey of the food situation and you have taken into account the two million tons of foodgrains from the United States. Are you aware, Sir, that a very optimistic appraisal of the situation has been given by India's High Commissioner in London and the Honourable Minister for Health.

JN: What Mr Krishna Menon said was practically on the same lines as we were thinking. We pointed out to him the scare in the British Press and elsewhere. This is what they say: "This is worse than the Bengal famine. In Bengal famine it is estimated that 3½ million people died. This is worse and more people will die." Even a very sober paper like the *New Statesman and Nation* said: "Under the best of circumstances one million people will surely die in Bihar." It had no relation to facts and we asked our High Commissioner there and other Ambassadors to impress that whatever happened, this is not going to happen. This scare is no good. We are not going to tolerate that kind

of thing happening. And he has laid stress on this and also on the other aspect of positive measures—what we are doing, etc. One has to balance these things. It is possible that if we started shouting all over the world that we are dying of hunger and starvation we might get something more in the shape of gifts, etc. On the other hand, it would not be quite true and it is not becoming for us to go about shouting like that.

Q: Mr Krishna Menon said that the main problem was transport. Surely your main problem is to get the grain?

JN: Again, you see you can put it whichever way you like. The main problem is to get the grain but the grain has to be unloaded at the ports. There is at present certain maximum limits upto which we can receive at any particular time. We can of course gradually increase our capacity. The present maximum capacity is 600,000 tons per month. Now if more comes we cannot easily unload the grain. We cannot easily clear it away. Now we are trying to space them out at 600,000 tons per month—a little more or less. We may increase our capacity. In that sense transport and port facilities become important.

Q: Some districts of UP have recently promised to give free foodgrains to you.

JN: Yes, we have asked all of them to hand over these collections to District Magistrates. Now, sometimes it so happens that the cost of transport to Bihar from distant places is fairly heavy. Suppose we get 10,000 maunds of foodgrains from Meerut District. Since we are sending to our utmost capacity foodgrains to Bihar, we allot 10,000 maunds of the stuff as gift from Meerut. We do not send the actual grain collected from Meerut. Again the Kashmir Government gave us 20,000 maunds of rice for Bihar. It also shows that the food situation in Kashmir is far more satisfactory than it was at any time in the last three years. In Kashmir the general economic condition had improved tremendously, the supply position, the food position, the transport position, the administrative position, though there are plenty of difficulties, plenty of mistakes, but the progress made is remarkable. One test of it is that a large number of tourists are going there, which is just like old times. Every houseboat is engaged there. That itself shows normality is returning to Kashmir, more so in regard to food and the fact they could afford to give us 20,000 maunds of rice shows that they could with some difficulty spare something. I say this because in the Pakistan papers there are scare headlines of starvation in Kashmir. The rations there are exactly double the rations we give here—half a seer of rice per day per person.

When they gave us 20,000 maunds, it struck me that the cost of sending rice from Kashmir to Bihar would be tremendous. It is wasting good money.

So we suggested, give us the money for it and we will buy the rice for you. They have agreed. So we adjust these things.

Q: Are you going to North Bihar yourself?

JN: I am going to spend about a day and a half in Bihar; half of that period in the Darbhanga District which is the worst-affected district, going about the rural areas and then the rest in Patna.

Q: Have you tried to get food from the Middle East?

JN: We have taken plenty of dates from Iraq and I must confess I have been surprised occasionally by some of our State Governments not welcoming these dates, welcoming in the sense they have been having a little difficulty in disposing them.

Q: What about Egyptian rice?

JN: We have tapped all sources in the Middle East. At the present moment we have got enough foodgrains, as much as we can deal with at the ports. We have got some rice or wheat from the Middle East countries....

14. The Situation in Bihar¹

I have come to this city of yours after a long time and for a special purpose. Actually I had gone to assess the food situation in Darbhanga and now I am here for the same reason. I wished to discuss about the imminent famine conditions in some parts of Bihar. It is obvious that the issue is not confined to your State alone and is much larger and I am willing to accept that if there has been any shortcoming or delay on our part in facing this question, the responsibility rests with many. But the ultimate responsibility is that of the Government of India and above all, mine. If I have been chosen by you as the Prime Minister of India, it is a great honour. But at the same time, it is a position of great responsibility and whatever good or bad happens in India which concerns the Government, ultimately the responsibility rests with the Prime Minister. I do not wish to absolve myself at all from that responsibility. I want to make this quite clear because nowadays there is often criticism of the Government at Delhi or in the State, sometimes rightly and sometimes wrongly, too, in my opinion. So nowadays voices are raised.

1. Parts of a speech at a public meeting at Patna, 19 June 1951. AIR Tapes, NMML. Original in Hindi. Extracts. For other parts of the speech, see *ante*, pp. 17-30.

What I was saying was that nowadays there is a great deal of talk about the Government's deficiencies and weaknesses. It has also been said, here in this city of Patna, just a few days ago that this Government should resign. For various reasons, I am perfectly willing to comply with that because I am terribly harassed and it is a tremendous burden. But I want to make it quite clear that whatever mistakes are made by the Government of India, I am responsible for them, whether I am directly involved or not. We cannot evade our responsibilities.

Let me tell you in this connection that I was touring in the Darbhanga area and heard a peculiar slogan which I did not like. The slogan was "Long live the Nehru Government." I do not know if it was being shouted by the partisans of Government or others. Perhaps they thought that I would be thrilled to hear that slogan. But I am not at all happy and it seemed a little artificial to me. Slogans should be national slogans like *Jai Hind*, *Bharat Mata Ki Jai*, *Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai*, etc. These are our national slogans and you do not need any others. I feel that it is absolutely wrong to shout such slogans.

So, first of all, I would like to say something about this problem which has brought me here—the food problem. Perhaps you are well aware of the difficulties that have come upon Bihar in the last year and a half. You may also know what actions the Government here or the Government of India have taken in this connection, especially in the last two or three months. I will not go into the whole thing though two things are quite clear. Firstly, the problem that has arisen here is beyond human control. Secondly, we must accept the fact that perhaps if we had worked harder in the beginning, we could have brought it under control faster. You may say that it is our fault to some extent and also lack of resources. There was shortage of foodgrains all over India at that time. But in the last two or three months, the Government of Bihar and the Government of India have paid attention to this matter and we have done whatever we could. I have no doubt that we can bring this matter under control. What does that mean? We have opened nearly six or seven thousand fair price shops all over Bihar. We have also made arrangements to provide work to the unemployed who have no money to buy food. Food will be distributed free at various centres. All these things will continue and so I feel that there is no great danger just now. The view that some people held that there will be a big famine in Bihar like the Bengal famine of 1942-43 is absolutely wrong and as I said, in a sense the matter is under the Government's control. But it would be wrong to think that the problem has been solved and we can relax and do our day-to-day work. Such a problem does not get solved easily. It is true that people will not die in large numbers but any visitor to Bihar can see how undernourished and weak the children are. It hurts me and moves me to tears to see this. Whatever happens to the older people, every child in India should have the right to food, education,

health and the opportunities to grow and make progress so that he can become a good citizen of India and serve his country. If we cannot look after even our little children, what will the future of the country be? So the most important question before us is to solve this problem of scarcity and somehow bring it under control.... But the fundamental problem is to ensure that the people of India are fed. The population of the country is increasing constantly. So what is the remedy? There can be two or three remedies. One is that the production must increase much more than the population. Secondly, the increase in population can be controlled. The third solution is to do both. You must consider all of them. Otherwise, the result will be that we will have to give up all our great plans for the development of the country. So long as we do not eradicate hunger and assure adequate food for the 37 crores of Indians, we cannot take up anything else. It is possible that we may import foodgrains from other countries, and it is obvious that we will do so whenever it is necessary. Please remember that even this year we have imported forty lakh tons. Also, please remember that this figure does not include the twenty lakh tons which the United States is sending. Either they have already started sending or they will send very soon, within this year. So you can imagine what a tremendous burden it is upon the nation to import 15-16 crore maunds from outside. We imported it because it is our duty to keep the people from starving and we shall certainly do so again if the necessity arises.

The broad question before us is how to feed the increasing population. We can either control the population increase or increase our food production so much that it is enough to feed the increasing population. This is the basic question. It is easy to argue and criticize, though some criticisms may be valid, but this problem cannot be solved by shouting slogans. Ultimately the problem can be solved if you and I and all of us in the country sit down and think of ways to solve it. It is not good for any country and specially a country like India to be unable to produce enough to eat. We can get food from outside but there are two dangers in that. One is that in today's world, which is full of talk of war, it is dangerous to rely upon other countries for food. We can never be sure when they will cut off supplies or we may not be able to get them across if a war is not on. Or then again, they can use this deliberately to put pressure on us and refuse to send the supplies. It is a dangerous thing for an independent country to place itself in such a situation. Our freedom can be in peril if we are dependent on other countries for food. This is one thing. The second important factor is, how can we go ahead with our plans for development? It is true that they provide much-needed work to the people, but we need a great deal of money too....

We will import food if we have to but the enormous amount of money that goes out of the country will not be available for other things. The money that we wanted to use for development has gone out. The development work

has stopped. Therefore it becomes necessary to increase our food production and not import it unless it is absolutely essential. We can stock up against an emergency but we cannot exist on imported foodgrains for long. So these are the big problems before us for which we have to find solutions. In a sense, you have faced a near disaster in Bihar because we were on the brink of a famine but in a way it has been good too because a calamity always jolts people out of their lethargy. Let me tell you a secret. Do not tell anybody else about it. Every Government in the world needs to be shaken up now and then. Otherwise it falls into a lethargy and complacency. Therefore I dislike this slogan—"Long live the Nehru Government." It is absolutely useless. I want people to disagree with and criticize our Government, but on the condition that it is intelligent criticism, not criticism merely for the sake of criticism....

It is not my habit to bestow false praise on anyone. But I am prepared to say this, that whatever mistakes we may have made earlier, very brisk work is now being done in Bihar on the Government side and by the officers. Everyone that we have sent to enquire and report on the situation has shown that the matter is being given top priority and the activity is almost frenzied. A task can be complete only in this way and not by bureaucratic methods and by sitting in the office. To be really effective, you have to go out into the field to get imbued with enthusiasm and get the work done, even if the world turns topsy turvy. This is how we have to work....

15. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

New Delhi

June 21, 1951

Nan dear,

I returned from my visit to Nepal and Bihar today. I have received a number of letters from you which I should like to reply to. Perhaps I might do so later. For the moment, this is to acknowledge your letter of the 11th June and your note of June 14th, with which you sent me a brochure about the "Share a meal with India Committee." The story told in this brochure is a moving one and I think we should give some publicity to it here. I might mention that it would be better if you sent the money to us rather than some quantity of wheat which is merely added on to the major supplies and gets rather lost in them. As a matter of fact, we are getting as much wheat from abroad as our ships can hold or as our ports can disembark. Food collections are being made in various parts of India. Usually we ask them to send us the money. That is more convenient and saves transport. We are anyhow sending

1. JN Collection.

as much as we can to Bihar or Madras. What we do is to buy and separate some quantity of the wheat sent and distribute this free in the name of the donors.

My visit to Nepal (Indu accompanied me) was most interesting. The place is in many ways quite Gilbertian. I have never seen so much solid silver and pure gold in my life. The political situation is intriguing. It is full of difficulty of course, but nevertheless there is promise in it. It is astonishing to think of the changes that have taken place during the last 8 or 9 months. Nobody could have imagined last year that Nepal could have changed so much so soon.

I had a tremendous welcome there from all classes. The King and many others treated me as if I was some kind of a patron-saint of Nepal. When I was coming away, I was told that there were a few presents for me. I discovered enough to fill a small room in a museum. The Prime Minister sent me a *dali*. This consisted of about 20 or more large trayfuls of fruit, vegetables and flowers, half a dozen big baskets of live chickens, quails, etc. Also four or five live goats, not to mention various other things.

In Bihar, though it is true that we have turned the corner and are sending large quantities of food supplies, it was sad to notice large numbers of famished children and others. We shall have to work hard for many months before we get back to normality. In Patna, I had an enormous meeting. The audience was variously estimated from two lakhs to five lakhs. In Darbhanga, where I was just passing through, about 100,000 people gathered. The loudspeaker arrangement failed. After waiting for half an hour, I proceeded to Patna by air. I learnt later that the crowd was so infuriated at the failure of the loudspeaker arrangements that they smashed them up and destroyed the platform etc.

I have practically decided to take a week off. That is the most I can manage. I shall go on the 26th to Kashmir, straight to Pahalgam. I might trek for two or three days and then rest at Pahalgam, returning to Delhi about the 3rd or at the latest 4th of July.² On the 8th July I intend going to Mysore and Bangalore for the Working Committee and AICC meetings, which are very important and on which depends largely the future of the Congress. All this entails a heavy burden upon me, because I have to do much of the thinking and writing. I have been feeling very tired and exhausted, but I hope that my week in Kashmir will do me good. Apart from this feeling of tiredness, I am quite fit.

I have not seen the letters that you have written to Bajpai.³ He is away on leave for six weeks. Indeed most people seem to be away. I can quite understand your desire to come back to India. If you want to be in Paris in

2. Nehru was in Kashmir between 26 June and 4 July 1951.

3. G.S. Bajpai, Secretary-General, Ministry of External Affairs.

December,⁴ that should not be difficult to arrange. You can stay on at Washington as long as you like and then go to Paris and later come to India. That will presumably be just after the elections. What will happen in those elections, no one knows.

Of course Tara can stay at Anand Bhawan when and as long as she likes.

With love from
Jawahar

4. Vijayalakshmi Pandit wished to stay for about a month in Paris in December.

16. To Chief Ministers¹

New Delhi
June 25, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

Some months ago I made a public appeal over the radio for food gifts for Bihar and Madras. Immediately there was a wide response. I received letters and telegrams and the newspapers contained items of news about the people offering foodgrains and collecting them for this purpose. I was personally told of collections in several parts of the Uttar Pradesh, Bombay, etc. In fact, I was very pleased with this response.

Later, it seemed to us that this transport of gift foodgrains would be rather wasteful, as we were in fact sending the maximum quantity by railway to Bihar. We issued specific instructions that all such gift foodgrains should be sent to the District Magistrate concerned and reports should reach us frequently through the provincial Government. In order to avoid delay we further suggested that copies of these reports should be sent by District Magistrates direct to our Food Ministry.

Later we suggested that foodgrains should not normally be sent to Bihar direct. If the distance was short this might be done. But generally, it was better for the provincial Governments to retain those foodgrains and send us the price of them. This money was to be sent direct to me for the special fund I had opened. Foodgrains would be purchased by us from this fund and distributed free on behalf of the donors.

1. This letter is also printed in G. Parthasarathi (ed), *Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-1964*, Vol 2 (New Delhi, 1986), pp 430-431.

Some months have elapsed and hardly any reports have come to us from the State Governments; nor does any money come. The Kashmir Government is the only Government that has functioned in this behalf and sent us a considerable sum of money for free food for Bihar. All this is a great mystery to me. What is happening to all the foodgrains collected and why do we not get reports or money? Where are all these collections going to and why all this delay? I would like you to let me know immediately because this matter is worrying me greatly.

I am troubled for two reasons. Firstly, that after all this business of appealing and response nothing further is being done. It seems that our energy somehow fades away after that first effort. Also that our work is so dilatory that it seldom produces much result.

Secondly, the fact remains that the need for food relief in Bihar and Madras is tragically important. I do not know how far this is realised. But I have seen the little children in Bihar, all shrunk up by continued undernourishment, their growth stunted. That picture is before me. I promised them relief and I hoped that relief would flow from all over India. I have waited and waited with very little result, and yet there is no doubt of the public response. What then has happened and where is the bottleneck, physical or psychological? Can we not function in an emergency with some speed and efficiency? These questions assail me, and I am, therefore, writing to you on this subject, so that you might throw some light on this mystery which baffles me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

BUILDING THE NATION**II. Food and Agriculture****(ii) Foreign Aid**

1. Food Imports from Burma, China and Soviet Union¹

...Question: As our food import policy and the ill-coordinated Grow-More-Food Campaign have resulted in our asking for food gifts, would you contemplate entering into bilateral agreements with Burma and other countries for food?

Jawaharlal Nehru: We have to enter into bilateral agreements with some countries, Burma and others.

Q: On a long-term basis, I mean.

JN: That has nothing to do with the present position in India. If any country will offer help to us on a long-term basis, we are going to take advantage of it, no doubt, but it has nothing to do with the major problem this year or possibly later. I want you to appreciate that these difficulties may be caused by our lack of wisdom or by our policy not having been quite sound or correct at any particular moment but it is something much more basic than that. The only way ultimately to solve it is to grow food ourselves. There is no other way, bilateral or unilateral or any other way. So long as we have to rely on food from outside, we are dependent not only for food but also for shipping.² Tremendous rates are being charged. If I may give you an example of how these things function, in England today, I am told, there is very little meat to be had. The British people consume or would like to consume fairly large quantities of meat, but they cannot because they just cannot get it. Their normal supply of meat comes from Argentina. The Argentina prices went up or were put up. Shipping freight went up. The United Kingdom Government said and thought that this rise in freight was wholly unjustified. They said they would not buy the meat. They have preferred to cut down their food, to starve and not be forced to pay in this way. All countries have to face these difficulties but they put up with them and do not shout so much as we do here.

Q: What about the rumours in some quarters that the Soviet Government offered some wheat but that the Government of India have not taken advantage of that offer?

JN: Elaborate statements have been made about that by our Food Minister that there has been no firm offer. We have been in correspondence with them

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 13 March 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 103, 153, 295, 355-356, 361-366, 443-445, 482-484, 502-505.

2. See footnotes 2 and 4 on *ante*, p. 40.

repeatedly. I believe we got some wheat once. I am talking about recent times. There is no clear and firm offer and if there is a clear and firm offer, I have no doubt that we will take advantage of it. We are in continuous touch with them.

Q: Was a request made to Moscow?

JN: Enquiries were addressed to them.

Q: Have you got any offer from China for more food?

JN: I could not tell you.³

Q: Would you stop the food imports first or make the country self-sufficient first?

JN: We cannot stop food imports and allow the people to starve, but we can put up with a certain measure of privation in the process. It is a question of balancing. There is a limit beyond which we cannot go.

Q: How is it that there have been so many difficulties this year?

JN: I think you should address the question to the gods.

Q: In this grave emergency why don't you take up the food portfolio yourself? The complaint is that you are devoting more attention to foreign affairs than to these important problems.

JN: It may interest you to know that when I meet a conference say of rehabilitation people, they say "why don't you take up this most important matter of rehabilitation in your control?" This applies to quite a number of other subjects too. As a matter of fact, if I try to tell you how I divide up my time—foreign affairs probably take up less of my time than other important subjects of Government—whether it is food or any other matter—I am continuously interesting—perhaps interfering—myself in them.

3. The Indian Government had asked for 50,000 tons of foodgrains, the shipping of which had been arranged, but that not being enough, a contract between the Indian and the Chinese Governments for the supply by China of 100,000 metric tons of rice to India was signed on 26 May 1951. The purchase was on a cash basis and the price to be paid was "reasonable".



WITH LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI AT HAZRATPUR VILLAGE, BULANDSHAHR
DISTRICT, 29 APRIL 1951



WITH VOLUNTARY WORKERS IN FLOOD-AFFECTED AREAS IN BIHAR, 19 JUNE 1951

Q: How do you justify the ending of food subsidies to provincial Government, and fixation of foodgrain procurement prices?⁴

JN: These are intricate details and you would not like me to deal with them in a casual manner.

4. A Conference of Chief Ministers and Food Ministers, meeting in New Delhi on 19-20 August 1950, adopted a common programme for ensuring a uniform food policy throughout India. Its salient features were: (1) unified direction in matters of food policy between the Centre and the States; (2) procurement of all controlled grains to be intensified in all States, whether producing a surplus of food or not; and (3) price levels of different grains to be coordinated in all States. On 7 February 1951, it was stated in Parliament that the Central Government would spend Rs 21.32 crores in food subsidies in 1951-52 as against Rs 20.77 crores spent in 1950-51, although the operation of the food subsidy scheme had been restricted because it meant an unbearable burden on Central finances.

2. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

New Delhi
March 22, 1951

Nan dear,

The news about the discussions in Washington about supplying foodgrains to us is gradually raising the temper of our people. There is a great deal of resentment at the way India is being treated in this matter by Congressmen in the USA. We know that the State Department has done its best to get this thing through Congress.²

Anyhow, we have to face the situation of not getting these foodgrains from the United States, or perhaps of some offer tied up with conditions which we find it difficult to accept. That will no doubt create a very difficult situation for us. Conditions are bad enough now. They will be worse. But there is no help for this and we shall have to do what we can to face this

1. JN Collection.
2. A Bill authorizing expenditure of \$ 190,000,000 for the purchase of the grain for India was introduced in the House of Representatives on 15 February 1951 by a group of 11 members, drawn from both parties, and was approved on 28 February by the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Sponsors of the Bill met in conference on 21 March 1951 and reported that the House Rules Committee had not formally voted, but sentiment was against making a gift. It was expected that the House might not approve the Bill, but, at least, it would offer to loan the foodgrains to India.

severe crisis, which might involve terrible misery for our people. We shall try to get foodgrains from abroad, from any country that can supply them. We shall have to introduce stringent measures in the country and take all other steps to make the best use of what we have. Fortunately the wheat crop is a good one. Bihar and Madras are suffering greatly. Bombay comes next.

I am merely writing this to inform you of the situation. There is nothing to be done about it either by you or by us at the present stage. We shall quietly watch developments, meanwhile taking such other steps as we can.

Edgar Mowrer³ came to see me today. His recent writings have not endeared him to me. Nevertheless I met him. I fear I spoke somewhat warmly to him. I did not want to speak about the food situation and the US Congress discussions, but he brought up the subject and so I told him exactly how I felt.

With love from
Jawahar

3. Edgar Ansel Mowrer (1892-1977); American journalist and author; war correspondent, 1914-15 in Europe for the *Chicago Daily News*; syndicated columnist on world affairs since 1943; author of *The Nightmare of American Foreign Policy* (1948), *Challenge and Decision* (1950), *A Good Time to be Alive* (1959) and *An End to Make-Believe* (1961).

3. Cable to S. Radhakrishnan¹

Your telegram 30 of 21st March. Repeated reports were circulated in newspapers here, especially by TASS Agency, that Soviet Government prepared to supply foodgrains to India, but we were not responding. Thereupon the Food Minister wrote to Soviet Embassy pointing out that he had received no offers and that he would be glad to consider such offers.

2. Vague and informal reply has been received by us that Soviet might supply 50,000 tons in exchange for raw jute. This is not helpful at all as we have no raw jute available and have to buy it from Pakistan.

1. New Delhi, 23 March 1951. JN Collection.

3. We would like you to approach Soviet Government and ask them if they can supply foodgrains to us in near future. We should like to have full information about quantity, quality and price.²

2. K.M. Munshi announced in Parliament on 7 April 1951 that although an offer by the Soviet Union to exchange 50,000 tons of wheat for raw jute had to be refused as India did not have sufficient jute to spare, negotiations were in progress regarding a second offer to barter 500,000 tons of wheat for a wide range of commodities. Following an announcement on 10 May 1951, the Soviet Union agreed to supply 50,000 tons of wheat on a cash basis and the first consignment of 6,700 tons arrived at Bombay on 31 May. A barter agreement involving the supply by the Soviet Union to India of 100,000 tons of wheat was signed in New Delhi on 22 June 1951. India was in return to supply to the Soviet Union jute, tea and other commodities of the same value.

4. Food for India from the United States¹

I must confess that these draft Bills come as a shock.² I do not quite know what we can do in the circumstances. We might at least point out to the US Ambassador here³ that some of the provisions of this Bill are not likely to add to the prestige of the US in India or to increase goodwill between the two countries. Whatever the purpose of the Act may be from the point of view of the US in regard to their foreign policy and national interests, it is for them to determine. But it should be clearly understood that that does not reflect our policy. Further that we see absolutely no reason why the US should supervise, interfere with or in any way concern themselves with the use we make of internally grown foodgrains or those we get from abroad apart from the particular US consignments. As for a mission, we are prepared to have US observers and we will give the normal facilities, but we are not prepared to

1. Note to Secretary-General, MEA, 10 April 1951. JN Collection.

2. A minority report by four Republican members of the Committee objected to making the Indian Government "a gift it had not asked for," and recommended that the grain should instead be made available in the form of a loan repayable in strategic materials. There should also be American supervision of the distribution of foodgrains and of expenditure of money realised from sale of foodgrains on development projects. In the Senate, a broadly similar Bill was introduced by a group of 30 Senators which, in its original form, provided that half the grain should be sent in credit and the other half as a gift.

3. Loy W. Henderson.

have a foreign mission becoming a supervising authority over our Government in the discharge of any of its responsibilities.

The American Ambassador should be told that if there is any value in the US sending any foodgrains (and that value is rapidly disappearing), it will fade away completely if conditions which are considered dishonourable by India are attached to it.

I think this is an important enough matter to be considered by the Foreign Affairs Committee and I shall convene a meeting very soon.

I am surprised that our Embassy in Washington took such a long time in drawing our attention to this matter.

The papers might be sent to HM Home.

5. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

New Delhi

April 11, 1951

Nan dear,

Thank you for your two letters of 29th March and 2nd April....²

Last night I came across a file which contained the Emergency Food Relief Bill which is before the US Congress as well as a draft bilateral agreement between the US and India in regard to this food. I was greatly taken aback by these two documents which had come rather casually to me. Indeed they had been addressed by Bijju Nehru³ to the Food Ministry, who had sent them on to us. As a matter of fact, they are of the highest political importance and I wish we had known about them earlier. I am immediately having them considered in Cabinet here to determine what action we should take. I have sent you a brief telegram today about them. In a day or two we shall send you full instructions for the State Department.

Our present reactions are entirely opposed to any acceptance of the conditions laid down in the bilateral agreement. They amount practically to converting India into some kind of a semi-colonial country or at least a satellite

1. JN Collection. Extracts.

2. In her letter of 2 April 1951 Vijayalakshmi Pandit thanked Nehru for writing about her retirement. She wrote that she had speaking engagements until June and was also "under contract to finish an account of the recent changes taking place at home called "This is India", which was to be handed over to the publishers by July. She also thought it proper to visit Mexico during its Independence celebrations in September.

3. B.K. Nehru was at this time Executive Director for India in the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Minister, Indian Embassy, Washington.

in the economic sense. They are entirely opposed to the policy we have been pursuing. I realise completely the consequence of our refusal of this gift. Nevertheless I cannot bring myself to agree to this final humiliation.

We shall try our best to get what foodgrains we can from other countries. We shall buy to the extent of our resources from the US. If we can get foodgrains from the US on some long-term payment basis, well and good. Otherwise we shall manage as best as we can.

The spectre of starvation and famine is haunting India and the prospect of the next few months is a little terrifying to contemplate. Conditions in Madras and Bihar are already bad. The gods are most unkind to us....

With love from
Jawahar

6. Foodgrains from the United States¹

I wrote a note on this file last night.² But then I kept the file to myself and I consulted HM Home and HM States. They were definitely of opinion that we could not agree to the terms contained in the draft bilateral agreement and that we should make this clear to the US Government.

We have therefore to send specific instructions to our Ambassador in Washington. These instructions should be sent, if possible, tomorrow. Meanwhile I am sending a telegram to our Ambassador in Washington warning her of our reactions.

In your interview with the American Ambassador tomorrow, you might indicate these reactions.

Subject to what we finally decide, I think that our approach should be somewhat as follows:

We are grateful for the efforts of the US Government to make a gift of foodgrains to us to help us to face the famine conditions that are growing in India. On considering, however, the draft bilateral agreement which has been sent to us, we find that it contains some provisions which it is not possible for us to accept. We would gladly welcome American

1. Note to Secretary-General, MEA, 11 April 1951. JN Collection. Extracts.

2. See *ante*, pp. 71-72.

observers in India to help and advise us in regard to distribution of foodgrains as well as our productive schemes. But we cannot agree to our distribution system as well as our development plans to be placed in any way under the control of a foreign agency. We would therefore suggest that instead of a gift, such as is proposed, and which is accompanied by conditions which we are unable to accept, that foodgrains should be supplied to us on a basis of a deferred payment. If this is not possible, then we shall buy such quantity of foodgrains as we can afford.

...I have not quite followed why Canada's wheat offer was rejected by us. It was stated that it was not accepted because the wheat was not good enough. Banerjee,³ our representative there, issued a statement which did not appear to me at all happy. In today's paper there is a message from Ottawa stating that Canada's offer of free wheat to India still stands despite India's rejection of it. I think this matter should be investigated immediately. I just do not see why we should reject any offer of this kind, when we are so terribly in need of every kind of foodstuffs.

3. P.K. Banerjee was at this time the Indian High Commissioner in Canada.

7. Cable to Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

I have just seen B.K. Nehru's letter dated 12th March² addressed to Gupta enclosing draft bilateral agreement regarding food. I have also now seen for the first time the Bill before Congress for Emergency Food Relief to India. I am surprised that these were not communicated to us at an early stage, as they involve very important and far-reaching decisions of policy. In effect United States Government will largely control not only our distribution system but even our development plans. We would thus barter away to some extent our freedom of action. This is a very serious matter and we do not feel inclined to agree to these conditions even in exchange for food which we want very badly.

This is for your immediate information. We shall send you full directions soon as to what step to take.

1. New Delhi, 12 April 1951. JN Collection.
2. In his letter to R.L. Gupta, the Special Secretary in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, B.K. Nehru stated Government's specific objections about the tentative draft of the bilateral agreement regarding food.

8. Cable to Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

We have considered draft bilateral agreement regarding supply of foodgrains by USA, forwarded with Nehru's letter dated 12th March to Gupta. Agreement, which contains several objectionable provisions, is based upon Bill introduced in Congress on 15th February, text of which was forwarded to us only on 12th March. We are surprised at delay in transmission of Bill, objectionable features of which should have been apparent from outset to Embassy and should have been brought to our notice for immediate comment.

2. This agreement envisages some kind of control of our distribution system as well as, to some extent, of our development plans by a special mission sent by United States which is to be given diplomatic status. This would be a limitation of our sovereignty in the domestic field. While we would welcome advice of American observers, we think it wholly unnecessary and cannot agree to place our distribution system of foodgrains or our development schemes in any way under the control of a foreign agency, or, as regards development plans, make them subject to agreement of another Government. Public opinion in India would resent such conditions. Further, Section 2 of the Bill is so worded as to be likely to raise objection in the public mind in India as regards the independence of our foreign policy being affected as a direct result of this gift.

3. Reference in agreement to distribution without discrimination as to race, creed or political belief seems totally unnecessary and perhaps unbecoming in view of the provisions of our Constitution and our well-known policy of non-discrimination. There can be no objection to publicity of programme and progress, but whole object of publicity will be defeated if this is made a legal obligation.

4. In particular, objectionable feature of the draft agreement in our opinion is that Article 2 (a) read with Article 5 seeks to control distribution, through a special American mission not only of the supplies made available by USA, but of supplies obtained locally, or imported from outside sources by Government of India.

5. We are grateful to US Government for its efforts to make a gift of foodgrains to India. We cannot, however, accept conditions to which we have taken objection, and would be glad if our objections could be adequately met.

6. Our original request was for foodgrains to be supplied on easy terms, such as deferred payment, etc. If it is not possible for our objections to be

1. New Delhi, 12 April 1951. JN Collection.

adequately met, we would prefer foodgrains to be supplied to us on basis of deferred payment.

7. Unless we can distribute foodgrains over large areas before advent of rainy season, situation may well become desperate. There has been considerable delay in our obtaining even grains already purchased by us in United States because of shipping difficulties. We would greatly appreciate if additional ships, such as those being taken out of "mothballs", were made available to us immediately for transport of foodgrains already purchased by us in America, so that as much as possible of foodgrains could come to India before end of May.

8. You should see Secretary of State,² or if you consider desirable, President to explain our point of view. American Ambassador here is also being apprised of our views on these lines.

2. Dean Acheson.

9. Cable to S. Radhakrishnan¹

Your telegram 36 of April 8th. We greatly appreciate Russian offer of foodgrains and are anxious to do everything possible to meet their requirements of commodities from India. I understand from your letter that Marshal Stalin has personally interested himself in this matter. Please express to him my appreciation.

(i) As you know, we do not normally have State trading, but we are prepared to do our utmost to obtain such commodities as we can and as are approved by Russia and make them available to USSR, in exchange for wheat.

(ii) Raw jute position differs from what it was in 1949 when Pakistan supplies were more freely available. At present we are not only in short supply but are tied down by agreement with Pakistan.² However, we shall investigate position which may change with arrival of new crop in August and we shall try our utmost to give Russia such quantity as we can after that.

(iii) Shellac. We are prepared to buy 4000 tons ourselves and make it available to Soviet.

1. New Delhi, 12 April 1951. JN Collection.

2. By an agreement signed on 25 February 1951, against Pakistan's export of 2,500,000 bales of raw jute, India was to send to her 50,000 tons of jute manufactures.

(iv) We are short of raw cotton and rubber and cannot supply any quantity. But we are examining what other goods could be made available and hope to telegraph about this shortly.

2. Immediate shipment of 50,000 tons of wheat will give greatly needed relief and we hope Soviet Government will be able to arrange this. In addition to shellac, we can promise to make other goods approved by Russia available in exchange for this quantity of wheat. Details regarding delivery, grades, adjustment of freight etc., can be negotiated in Delhi. As regards freight, we should like grain to the CIF³ Indian port and our shellac to be FOB⁴ Indian port. If Russians agree to be paid freight charges in Russia, we would prefer this.

3. Negotiations for balance of wheat can begin immediately after this deal of 50,000 tons has been concluded.

3. Cost, insurance and freight.

4. Free on Board.

10. Cable to S. Radhakrishnan¹

Your telegram 40 dated 13th April. We realise disadvantage of rouble sterling rate. But getting wheat FOB Russian port would mean our having to arrange for ships. In present shipping situation, this is very difficult. Early shipment is most important consideration with us and Russian offer attracted us specially because we understood that Russia would provide shipping. In our past barter transactions Russia has readily agreed to supply wheat on C & F² basis and if the point is raised with you, you should press for C & F terms.

2. If payment for freight in cash is going to raise difficulty we are prepared to drop that suggestion. Barter would then be between goods offered by us FOB Indian port and wheat offered by Russia on C & F basis and the element of freight would be taken into account in settling the quantities. This is basis on which barter were done in the past between us and Russia.

3. The price of shellac varies widely depending on grades. We do not know yet which grades and what quantities in each grade Russia will want. We do not also know the valuation which Russia will put on their wheat. Whether this will be current market price in USA or price of dollars 1.80 per bushel at which we are buying our wheat under the international wheat

1. New Delhi, 14 April 1951. JN Collection.

2. Cost and freight.

agreement, or something in between. Till these details are settled by negotiation, it is impossible to say what the quantities of each side will be. If, after negotiation, it is found that 4000 tons of shellac will not be the equivalent of 50,000 tons of wheat, the balance will be made up in other commodities as stated in paragraph 2 of our telegram of 12th April. But commitment regarding jute can only be made firmly when we have examined position after arrival of new crop in August. If 4000 tons of shellac in the grades settled with Russia are found to be more than the equivalent of 50,000 tons of wheat, an adjustment could be made by increasing the quantity of wheat.

11. To K.M. Panikkar¹

New Delhi
April 14, 1951

My dear Panikkar,

Damle is going early tomorrow morning and I am writing this letter in some haste.²

The food situation here has continued to deteriorate. The only slightly pleasant feature of it is that, generally speaking, the new crop is fairly good. It would have been better but for heavy rain and hail some two weeks ago. But in some parts of India, notably in the South and in Bihar, almost total lack of rain has practically prevented anything from growing. In parts of Madras there has been very little rain for four years and the ground is hard as stone. The difficulty thus in Bihar and Madras is not only no harvest this time but practically no sowing for the next season. Large numbers of people in these affected areas are near starvation. Somehow we are carrying on. But after about two months the position will be very bad indeed unless we get in a fairly large quantity of foodgrains before then. In Bihar, once the rains start, movement will be difficult and people will be marooned. Therefore it is essential that we stock a sufficient supply there before the rains come in. This applies to certain other areas too.

In the Punjab and the northern part of the UP, there is no such scarcity. But nevertheless it is not easy to procure grain.

Anyway, the position is that we must have foodgrains in the largest possible quantity and as soon as possible. You know that there has been for many

1. JN Collection.

2. On 15 April 1951, K.R. Damle, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Food, left for Peking, to work out details of the offer of food made by China to India. China had made an offer of 1,000,000 tons of foodgrains to India in exchange for sterling. The foodgrains from China included rice, maize and milo.

months talk of a gift of two million tons of foodgrains from the United States to India. We never asked for a gift. What we asked for was two million tons with deferred payment for them. When they started talking about gifts, we remained silent. Then came violent outbursts in the American Press and even in Congress there against India on political grounds. The State Department in the US, I must say, has tried its best to get this thing through Congress. Nevertheless, it has been held up and we do not quite know what will happen. Meanwhile, we have received intimation, rather indirectly, of various conditions attached to this food gift, if it comes off. The conditions generally are of supervision by a special commission which would also see to it how we spend the money, realised from the sale of foodgrains, in development schemes. As soon as we saw these conditions, we informed the US Government that we were not agreeable to them as proposed. We do not mind some observers coming here for the purpose, but any kind of special mission and any interference with our internal arrangement would not be tolerated. This has been made perfectly clear. What the result of this will be, I do not know.

We have further made it clear to the US that we would rather have foodgrains supplied to us on a deferred payment basis than as a gift with any conditions attached. We might even buy some for cash.

As a matter of fact our chief difficulty at the present moment is shipping. The foodgrains we have bought in America are still held up there, or rather are coming slowly, because of inadequate shipping. We have asked the US to supply us with more of their ships and to take these out of their mothballs.

It has thus become even more essential than previously for us to obtain foodgrains from other sources. Our Food Minister is going to Burma towards the end of this month for this purpose.³ Meanwhile we want to pursue the offers made by China and Russia. The Chinese offer is *prima facie* good, but for the shipping difficulty. The Russian offer is not so good, but there is no shipping difficulty there as the Russians are prepared to supply the ships. The difficulty about the Russian offer is that they are anxious to have raw jute and raw cotton from us, just the two things in which we are in short supply and which we are trying to get from Pakistan. Apart from this, we have come to an agreement with Pakistan which rather comes in the way of our sending abroad the raw jute we may get from them. We can however supply shellac and tea immediately to Russia and we might be able to give some raw jute later in the year in August or so when the new crop comes in.

3. The Food Minister, K.M. Munshi, led the Indian trade delegation to Burma on 20 April 1951 for negotiations with the Burmese Government to conclude a long-term trade agreement between the two countries, which included supply of 120,000 tons of rice by Burma to India.

From every point of view, we are anxious to get foodgrains from Russia and China, even more so from China than from Russia.⁴ I have told Radhakrishnan about our eagerness to get this stuff and asked him to try his best. We are prepared to do a barter deal with Russia and to procure the goods they want, even though this is not our normal practice.

Coming to China, we entirely appreciate the offer made by the Chinese Government and we realise that it is definitely a token of goodwill. I hope you will make it clear to them that we appreciate this offer not only because we want the food but also because it is a sign of friendship and goodwill. For our part, we want to go as far as we can to meet it and to accept it. As you know, our governmental apparatus is slow-moving and gets stuck in grooves. It is no easy matter to get it out of these grooves. Because of this, I am taking personal interest in this business to prevent these routines coming in the way. A special Food Committee has been appointed of which I am Chairman⁵ and I shall try to keep in touch directly with communications between you and the Food Ministry here, so that there might be no delay and no wrong answer might be sent to you.

Of course, in spite of my efforts, our Food Department might slip up. If any such thing happens, you should immediately draw my attention to it and I shall try to set it right.

I have explained to Damle that this question of food from China must not be looked upon as a normal routine deal and we should make every effort to remove obstructions. Further that he must show his eagerness to conclude the deal and be as friendly as possible to the Chinese authorities. You will of course coach him up.

So far as shipping is concerned, we shall have to rely mainly on London. We may get some small ships, tramps and others from Hong Kong. If so, well and good. But even these Hong Kong companies have their headquarters in London. You should therefore repeat your telegrams about shipping which you send us, to Hicomind, London, in order to avoid delay.

About the general political situation, there is much expectation of some move forward towards a peaceful settlement. Indeed I have been asked by Krishna Menon to take the initiative and make some official statement. I confess I am not clear at present what I should do and how anything that I do now can produce fruitful results. The dismissal of MacArthur is undoubtedly a good thing and there has been general relief all over the world, except in

4. China, which had already sold 50,000 tons of rice in exchange for jute, offered more and an agreement was signed in Peking in May for an additional 40,000 tons of Chinese grain—millet.
5. A Food Committee of the Indian Cabinet had been formed, under Nehru's chairmanship, and was reviewing daily the food situation throughout the country.

some sections in America. It is a move away from war and for that reason it is to be welcomed. But to expect some sudden reversals of policy by the US especially is unjustified optimism. Probably Truman has done as much as he could do by dismissing MacArthur. He will now have to show to the American public that he is not going in for what is called appeasement and that he is a strong man and all that. The result is that when any basic approach is to be made about the Far Eastern situation, Truman and the State Department will be outwardly at least as sticky as ever.

I think it is true that the UK as well as most European countries are very eager to take a step towards a peaceful settlement. We have been in touch with you by telegram. I suppose ultimately it is Formosa that will come in the way. I cannot imagine the US agreeing to give up Formosa in the near future at least. At the same time it is obvious, as you have repeatedly pointed out, that China attaches the greatest importance to Formosa. The only feasible step appears to be on the lines of the principles laid down by the UN, that is that Formosa should not be specifically mentioned but should be inferentially included. Whether China will agree to that, I do not know. I should have thought that agreement to this could not possibly weaken the Chinese hand at any stage. After all, the UK, Canada and some other countries, not to mention India, are clearly committed to Formosa being decided according to the Cairo Declaration.

There is undoubtedly a hunger for peace all over the world. The question is whether the great countries are big enough and wise enough to work really for peace. In the United States the colossal productive machine has been turned to war purposes. That itself creates forces in favour of war. Probably by the end of this year, this machine would have produced so much as to leave little choice between two or three courses—one will be war to consume what they have produced, the other might be a switch-over of the entire machine for peace purposes, and the third may be just a burst up of the internal economy.

Nepal is having a good deal of internal trouble.⁶ Perhaps that is natural because the change-over there took place far too easily. It was really rather remarkable. I think these troubles will continue for some time, but ultimately they will settle down. There has been recently an attempt at a counter-

6. On 12 April 1951, members of the Gurkha Dal, mainly composed of the personal bodyguards of the Prime Minister, Mohan Shamsher, and led by Bharat Shamsher, a member of the Rana family, attempted a coup. As a result, King Tribhuvan took over the supreme command of the Nepal army while B.P. Koirala became the Home Minister. The Gurkha Dal was declared unlawful throughout the country because of its violent and unlawful activities while the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief were charged at a Cabinet meeting held on 14 April 1951 at having indirectly supported Bharat Shamsher in his attempted coup.

revolution on a small scale. It was mistimed and failed. But the position continues to be a delicate one.

Our basic troubles in India at the present moment are economic and food especially. The law and order situation generally has deteriorated. We have every intention of having general elections in November-December next. But what will happen during these elections and after is a disagreeable problem. If any large-scale famine intervenes, then the position will be desperate.

Today I made a statement in Parliament about the non-recognition of the Maharaja of Baroda.⁷ A small group of rulers has been carrying on mischievous activities and Baroda has been specially insolent and objectionable.

You will be interested to know that both the US and the USSR Embassies here are carrying on propaganda on a very extensive scale. Much of this is open propaganda and they are issuing periodicals and leaflets in various languages, mostly dealing with cultural and like subjects. But apart from this, there are far-reaching ramifications also.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. Nehru read out in the Parliament on 14 April 1951 an Order issued by the President, by which the Maharaja Pratapsingh of Baroda was directed to abdicate in favour of his eldest son Fatesingh because the Maharaja had challenged the Constitution of India and had contested the merger of Baroda with Bombay, and also because he was supporting reactionary and anti-national elements in the country. See *post*, p. 554.

12. Cable to Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

Your telegrams 224 and 225 dated 13th and 14th April.² We have reconsidered position in light of McGhee's³ observation and your own and should like you to speak to him on following lines:

1. New Delhi, 17 April 1951. JN Collection.
2. Vijayalakshmi Pandit discussed in detail in the cables the wording of the Bill, the general terms of agreement, supervision of food distribution and of development plans as well as payment. The terms of agreement, she thought, were not different from those entered into by USA with other countries in respect of assistance from Economic Cooperation Administration and there was no question of ECA supervising or controlling India's food distribution system or development plans.
3. George M. McGhee, Assistant Secretary of State.

Government of India have, from beginning, appreciated sympathetic attitude of US Government in this matter. They also recognise that language of present Bill may, for the reasons explained by McGhee,⁴ be extremely difficult to alter. At the same time, they would point out that, although no one in USA may read Bills, this cannot be assumed about India where they will be carefully read and where opinion on subject of our sovereignty and independence of our policies, both foreign and domestic, is most sensitive. US Administration should be able to appreciate force of this argument from their own historical knowledge and current experience of American public opinion. In view, however, of what has been so clearly stated by McGhee, Government of India have no desire to embarrass administration and they will not press for amendment of provisions or language of the Bill.⁵ But they attach utmost importance to a clear declaration, at appropriate time, that assistance given to us is not intended to interfere with or influence our policy, foreign or domestic. We suggest that this be done by an exchange of letters at suitable time as also by public statement as mentioned by McGhee himself.

We feel that the draft agreement goes beyond even provisions of Bill in some respects. There is no reason why the agreement with India should adhere strictly to previous agreements. We should like it therefore to be suitably amended.

Food Distribution – We are glad of assurance that there is no question of US representatives supervising or controlling our other food supplies or our food distribution system and that function of observers is to be limited to a distribution of supplies made available by the United States. Article II(a) of draft agreement mentions not only such supplies but “similar supplies obtained locally or imported from outside sources by the Government of India.” This should be amended.

Development Plans – We also note with satisfaction that there is no question of supervision of our development plans, and that United States interests will be limited to counterpart funds alone and decision of how to use even this will be ours. We would like this to be made clear in the agreement.

Vijayalakshmi Pandit cabled that McGhee had told her on 14 April 1951 that any attempt to change standard terms in favour of India alone would make Congress suspicious and might well endanger passage of the Bill. Reference to race, creed or political belief or supervision by the United States Representative of distribution of supplies made available by the USA were standard terms and were in no way designed to reflect on Indian administration.

McGhee had wanted to know whether in the light of his explanations Nehru wanted to press any of his objections, and if so which.

As we have said before, we would welcome US representatives as observers. Success of agreement would depend entirely upon the spirit in which it is worked and this will depend upon understanding and loyal reciprocity. We shall give full help to US representatives in all their legitimate functions. We should like to emphasize that these representatives should not function as a separate mission but as part of the US Embassy whose cooperative and helpful attitude, from the beginning of these negotiations, has been much appreciated by us as guaranteeing harmony of working.

13. Cable to Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

Your telegrams 229 and 234 of April 18th² and 20th.³ McGhee's further clarifications considerably lessen effect of his previous assurances and leave matters rather vague. We confess we do not like this, but we do not wish you to make further approach on this subject to State Department. The position regarding Bills before Congress appears to change from day to day and we had better wait for fresh developments.

There is reference in newspapers about strategic materials being required in exchange for foodgrains.⁴ To some extent we are supplying strategic materials. It will hardly be possible for us to increase these quantities or to include something new.

We are keeping American Ambassador here generally informed of our reactions.

1. New Delhi, 21 April 1951. JN Collection.
2. Vijayalakshmi Pandit reported that McGhee, though he could not say how the Bill would finally emerge from the Congress, had assured that the Administration would do all they could both to prevent anything new being put into the Bill which would be distasteful to India and to make agreement acceptable to her. McGhee had further clarified regarding food distribution, counterpart funds and the Mission in order to avoid any future misunderstanding.
3. She reported that the existing Bills were giving way to new proposals both in the House and the Senate—the House Bill provided for a loan instead of a gift, repayment to be made partly in cash and partly by export of strategic materials spread over a number of years, while the Senate Bill provided part grant and part loan, the total amount of assistance remaining the same, ie, 190 million dollars and the programme to be handled by the ECA.
4. There were attempts in the House of Representatives to secure the adoption of a substitute Bill providing for the immediate and continuing transfer by India to the USA of "substantial quantities of monazite, beryl, raw jute and cyanite." These attempts were rejected by the House on 24 May 1951.

14. Cable to S. Radhakrishnan¹

We are waiting for your reply to our last telegram about purchase of 100,000 tons of wheat and barter arrangements therefor. Please expedite reply. We would suggest again further negotiations to be carried on in Delhi.

As regards our having to charter ships in excess of those provided by Soviet Government, we are informed from London that this is immediately possible for transport from Black Sea. We have to send them firm demand as soon as possible, as delay might result in change of position adversely.

Regarding freight charges on Russian ships, we are prepared to consider payment in kind, that is barter, provided we have adequate quantity of goods required.

1. New Delhi, 26 April 1951. JN Collection.

15. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon¹

Reference Food and Agriculture Ministry's telegram 34764 dated April 26.² Ambassador at Moscow³ tells us that Soviets are prepared to ship first 50 (half of 100) thousand tons Black Sea port in their own ships and may provide more shipping also provided negotiations in Delhi are speedily concluded.

Negotiations will begin here in a few days. Considering Russian offer of ships it does not appear likely that we shall ask you to charter ships for us before about middle of June.

1. New Delhi, 28 April 1951. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML.
2. In his reply of 30 April, Menon informed Nehru that he had sent him a copy of Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement of 27 December 1950 which was to be the basis of any agreement to be easily accepted by Russia.
3. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.

16. Cable to S. Radhakrishnan¹

No. Primin 21473. Food Minister spoke and wrote to Soviet Ambassador² asking for negotiations to begin here and Food Secretary³ has twice contacted Soviet Embassy asking when they will start negotiations. He has been told in reply that their Trade Commissioner⁴ is not in Delhi and they will inform us immediately when he returns.

2. The above is for your information only. There is no need to press Russia further for early commencement of negotiations. That would only make them feel that our need is so urgent that we would accept unfavourable terms.

3. Proposal now here is to offer shellac, tea, tobacco and raw jute in exchange for 2(half 4) lakh tons of wheat.

1. New Delhi, 7 May 1951. JN Collection.
2. Kiril Vasilevitch Novikov.
3. Vishnu Sahay.
4. I.S. Andrienko.

17. Cable to Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

Your telegram No. 273.²

(a) Paragraph 2—It is impossible to avoid indication of our preference for House Bill.³ Even if it is not included in my reply, supplementary question, necessitating declaration of preference, is bound to be asked. From this standpoint, if Administration would like us to postpone question and answer

1. New Delhi, 8 May 1951. JN Collection.
2. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, after discussing Nehru's telegram with McGhee, advised that no indication of Government's preference for House Bill be made public as this would embarrass friends in Senate and that since the Senate was meeting to discuss the Bill on 9 May, McGhee had suggested that Nehru's reply to Parliament be made on 9 May instead of Thursday, ie, 10 May 1951, so that the Wednesday morning papers in USA carried the statement.
3. The House Bill was a measure merely authorising the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) to loan the grain. The ECA was to advance the 2 million tons of grain on credit terms and secure repayment in Indian materials and metals. See the following item.

by a day or two, we can arrange it. In any case, it is impossible not to arrange for me to answer question tomorrow (Wednesday).

(b) As regards suggestion in paragraph 4 of your telegram,⁴ we have already informed American Ambassador here of reason why it is necessary to include, in my reply, statement of our inability to supply material relating to production of atomic or like weapons. Whether emergency aid is given under Senate or House Bill, we accept obligation to supply materials to USA. There has been so much criticism inside and outside Congress of our refusal to supply materials like monazite that our silence on subject now is likely to be construed, if not by Administration, by outsiders in USA, as willingness to consider supply of such material in part payment of aid rendered. It is absolutely essential that there should be no misunderstanding on this point or possibility of future charge of breach of faith by us. Henderson must have explained position to State Department and you should also do so, if you see no objection.

Unless I hear from you to the contrary, I shall answer question on Thursday.⁵

4. In paragraph 4, Vijayalakshmi Pandit wrote that she felt that while the first part of the paragraph of Nehru's telegram relating to supply of materials would strengthen India's position, its last sentence would cause great misunderstanding and confusion and therefore should be left out.
5. On 10 May 1951 Nehru said in Parliament, "In our view, there are no political or discriminatory conditions attached to these two Bills and, therefore, there can be no objection on this ground to our acceptance of either of them." See *post*, pp. 88-89.

18. Cable to Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

In continuation of my telegram of today's date,² I would like you to appreciate that I cannot make any statement which is limited to what US Administration desire. Any such limited statement would create misunderstanding both here and in America. We do not want any decision to be arrived at under false pretences or by suppression of our views on important matters. You should certainly inform McGhee of our views.

I am prepared to delay my answer in Parliament if this is State Department's wish.

1. New Delhi, 8 May 1951. JN Collection.
2. See the preceding item

In this matter we cannot ignore strongly-held public opinion in India which has become progressively more rigid because of statements made in America.³

3. For example, in a message to the Congress on 12 February 1951, President Truman mentioned "... We would expect our representatives in India to be given every opportunity to observe the distribution of the grain and to be sure that the aid we are supplying is distributed fairly.... Similarly we would expect the Government of India to deposit in a special account local currency equivalent to the proceeds from the sale in India of the grain we supply on a grant basis. This account would be used for the development and improvement of Indian agriculture...."

19. Food Assistance from the United States¹

There are two United States Bills to give emergency assistance in the shape of foodgrains to India; one was introduced in the Senate and the other in the House of Representatives.² Both Bills have undergone considerable changes since they were originally introduced. One of these revised Bills has been proposed by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and the other by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives.

The Senate Bill allots \$95 million for grain purchases in the current year, that is the year ending June 30, 1951, and authorises the appreciation of an additional sum of \$95 million for the fiscal year ending 30th June, 1952. This second part of the aid, however, shall not be made available until after further action by the Congress.

Both parts are divided on a fifty-fifty basis, half being a grant and half on credit terms as provided in Section iii (c) (2) of the Economic Cooperation Act of 1948, as amended.³

1. Statement in Parliament in reply to a question, New Delhi, 10 May 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol VII, Part I, columns 4131-4132.
2. Due to pressure of work the Bill was delayed until 20 April. The Bill, which in its original form provided that half the grain should be supplied on a loan basis, was adopted by the Senate on 16 May after approval of an amendment that the whole quantity should be supplied on a loan basis.
3. On 3 April 1948 the Economic Cooperation Act created the Economic Cooperation Administration to develop plans for European economic recovery; subsequent to the passage of the Act, 16 European nations formed the Organization of European Economic Cooperation to cooperate with the ECA in developing programmes to benefit western Europe. The Economic Cooperation Administration, which was set up in 1948 to administer the funds allotted under the Marshall Aid programme, officially came to an end at midnight on 31 December 1951.

Assistance in terms of the Bill will be available only after an agreement is entered into between India and the United States. It proposes that this agreement should contain certain undertakings ensuring distribution of food without discrimination, publicity to the assistance furnished by the US and permission for persons designated by the US Government to observe the distribution of supplies in India.

The House Committee Bill provides for emergency food relief on credit terms only in accordance with the provisions of Section iii(c) (2) of the Economic Cooperation Act of 1948, as amended. It authorises provision of a sum not exceeding \$ 190 million for the fiscal years 1951 and 1952. Repayment of this loan includes payment in goods under such terms and in such quantities as may be agreed to between the ECA Administrator and the Government of India. ECA loans are generally for a period of 33 to 35 years at an interest rate of 2½ per cent on unpaid principal with semi-annual interest payment. In the present case, it is proposed that the interest payment will begin on June 30, 1952 and the payment on principal some years later, which may be from five to eight years.

Such conditions as are attached to either of these Bills are the usual terms embodied in the USA legislation providing for economic assistance to foreign countries. In the Senate Bill there are certain conditions, which do not find a place in the House Bill, and much would depend upon the manner of implementation of these conditions.

There is a reference to our supplying various kinds of materials to the USA in part payment for the grain supplied. We shall gladly supply such materials as are available in India and can be spared by us. But I should like to make it clear that it is a fundamental part of our foreign policy that such material as is particularly related to the production of atomic or like weapons should not be supplied by us to foreign countries.

In our view, there are no political or discriminatory conditions attached to these two Bills and, therefore, there can be no objection on this ground to our acceptance of either of them. While the form in which assistance is given to India is a matter for the USA to decide, we would prefer the terms embodied in the House Bill, which are simpler.

I should like to express our gratitude to the Government of the United States for the efforts they have made to send foodgrains to India. I should also like to express our deep appreciation of the many messages as well as offers of material help unofficially received from many citizens of the United States.

20. US Economic Aid to India¹

Mr Steere,² Counsellor of the US Embassy, came to see me this afternoon. He was with me for about an hour and a quarter. We discussed the question of American economic aid which he had mentioned to the Secretary-General the day before. He had said that President Truman intended making a statement about aid to South Asia countries and the State Department wanted to know our reactions to any such proposal before they made their recommendations.

2. In my talk with him, I took his letter to the Secretary-General, dated May 24th, as the basis. I told him that we had made it repeatedly clear in the course of the last two years or so that we would welcome economic aid from America. I had repeatedly mentioned this fact to the American Ambassador here and also to Mr Dean Acheson in Washington. I had added that such aid should have no political strings attached to it and both the US Ambassador and Mr Acheson had assured me that there could be no question of political strings being attached to any aid.

3. I referred to President Truman's statement which appeared in this morning's newspapers. In this statement he had asked for over 8,000 million dollars for aid to various countries of the world. Much of this aid, though not all, was to be spent on armament programmes. I asked if this statement was the statement Mr Steere had in mind when he wrote to the Secretary-General and whether this 8,000 million dollars included the sum which it was intended to allot to South Asia.

4. Mr Steere said that he was not quite clear about this matter. The sum meant for South Asia was comparatively a small figure, under 200 million dollars. It was quite possible that this 200 million dollars or so formed part of the 8000 million dollars. But the objective underlining aid to South Asia countries would be somewhat different and purely economic because the US considered that economic progress was the best safeguard against wrong tendencies.

5. I asked him for what countries this was intended. He said in reply that the US had already given aid to Burma, Siam, Viet Nam and Indonesia. The proposed aid programme would include in its scope India, Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan and Ceylon. Of these countries India

1. Note to Secretary-General, MEA, 25 May 1951. JN Collection.

2. Lloyd V. Steere.

being the biggest and the most important, would undoubtedly get the largest share.

6. I asked him if this had anything to do with the Colombo Plan.³ He said that this was not directly connected with the Colombo Plan, but it was quite possible and indeed probable that this aid would be coordinated with that envisaged in the Colombo Plan.

7. I asked him about Nepal and what they had intended doing there. He said that last summer they had sent one of their mining engineers to Nepal and he had reported that there was a possibility of extracting minerals. He had found a pure variety of copper and some gold. It was not possible to say what the quantity of these minerals might be. While, therefore, nothing very much need be expected from Nepal without much further enquiry, there was certainly a possibility of extracting valuable minerals and helping thereby the progress of Nepal. He mentioned that a Swiss team, including a geologist, had also visited Nepal last summer.

8. I told him that there was reference to the ECA legislation of the US. This was a long and complicated Act and I had rather lost myself in the maze. I had therefore only a vague idea of what it contained and could not say much about it. I would therefore proceed on his letter to the Secretary-General (dated May 24th).

(i) I agreed that the commodities and services furnished would be distributed on mutually agreed terms and conditions.

(ii) I said that it was obvious that the Government of India wanted to promote sound economic development. I asked him what he meant by cooperation with other countries in order to reduce barriers to international trade. He said that this was something on the lines of the Torquay Conference.⁴ It would be a good thing if trade barriers between India and Pakistan were reduced.

(iii) I said that there would be no difficulty in the Government of India providing detailed information to the US about the projects we undertook and the operations under the agreement.

(iv) I asked him if the special ECA aid mission would be a continuous mission or a sporadic one visiting India from time to time. He said it would be continuous in its functioning. Such missions consisted chiefly of technicians,

3. Proposed by Australia in 1950 the plan provided for technical assistance for three years to the countries of South and South East Asia. £8 million earmarked for the purpose would be administered by a bureau set up at Colombo.

4. 34 nations representing 80% of the world's trade met at Torquay in south-west England to cut through trade barriers, and the first reports of the results of the seven months' talks that ensued were announced on 9 May 1951 and sweeping tariff concessions were granted.

experts, etc., and were available for consultation and advice. They did not themselves undertake any direct work.

(v) I asked him to explain to me the scope of this paragraph about counterpart funds. He drew my attention to the words "upto", which meant that the counterpart funds need not be commensurate with the dollar costs of commodities, services, etc., granted. In the case of other countries, counterpart funds had often been considerably less. Sometimes these funds had been used for budgetary purposes. I said that I would not like any such use being made of them and I would much rather that they were earmarked for productive schemes. He completely agreed. He said that normally these funds accumulated in case we sold some of the goods obtained to private enterprise. If the Government itself used them, it was possible to come to some other arrangement for that amount.

(vi) This refers to "the transfer of material actually or potentially deficient in the United States on reasonable terms, no less favourable than those given to other countries." I said that there would be no difficulty in our supplying to the US any goods or material that were surplus to our requirements. But there were some things on which we had placed a ban for export and we could not agree to their transfer. He said he quite understood. This referred to monozite and the like. They were not expecting any transfer of such materials. He asked me if we would not agree to build a plant for the processing of monozite with US aid. He mentioned that certain private interests in the US concerned with monozite etc., were exercising great pressure. I said that we were already building a processing plant which would begin functioning soon. Perhaps this was not as big a plant as the US might put up. Did he suggest that we should put up another and possibly a larger plant also? He said this might well be considered.

I asked him if the US had taken away the 400 tons of beryl that we had agreed to supply them. He was not quite sure, but he thought that they had. I mentioned that there were some rare earths also that we were prepared to let them have.

(vii) This refers to "full publicity". I said that this demand seemed odd to me. Of course publicity would inevitably be given to the projects we were undertaking, but to ask for it rather took away from the value of that publicity. He said that he appreciated what I said. What they wanted was publicity about the work done and the projects undertaken. The American people would be interested in this as also others. I said that we would be interested ourselves in giving publicity to the work that was being done. It all depended on the objective and the manner of doing it. He said that there had been no difficulty over this in any country and there need be none here.

(viii) This refers to an agreement to facilitate entry (including duty free provision) and distribution of US voluntary non-profit aid in India. It was not quite clear to me what this meant. Normally there should be no difficulty. But we did not wish anything thrust upon us which we did not require. He said he was not thinking of the US Government sending anything but private individuals sending gift parcels, like CARE, to individuals here. I said that I could not imagine any large number of parcels like this coming to known friends and certainly the kind of persons who required help here would not be known in the US. There was no point in sending gift parcels to persons who did not really need them. However, there need be no particular difficulty about this matter.

9. This exhausted the various points Mr Steere had mentioned in his letter. He had further added that the State Department was not in a position to indicate what additional terms and conditions Congress might insert in aid legislation and therefore they could not expect the Government of India to give any advance commitment for unknown provisions. I entirely agreed with him.

10. I told him that, as far as I could see, there was nothing specifically said in his letter which need give rise to any difficulty. Much would depend however on the basic policy underlying this economic aid as well as on the persons in charge of it here. Suppose there was a difference of opinion between the US and the Government of India in regard to either this basic policy or the methods of carrying it out. What then? Probably we would be able to iron out any petty differences in regard to execution. But it might be more difficult to deal with differences in policies and approach. Suppose, I said, that the US thought that the Government of India's policy was such that it was not right or worthwhile for them to help India in any way, they would naturally wish to stop that help then. Something to this effect was mentioned in the Food Bills before Congress. He said that could possibly happen. But it would not affect the help already given. At the most it would mean the stoppage of further help.

11. I said that, for my part, I could fully appreciate that if policies differed, the US would have the right to stop further help. In the same way we would have the right to go our way. He agreed.

12. I then referred to the fact that with the best will in the world we had found ourselves unable to agree with the United States policy in the Far East. We had expressed our disagreement sometimes by voting against it in the United Nations or by abstaining from voting. I did not propose to discuss these policies, but the fact of a certain basic difference remained and this had been disliked and resented in the US. I felt sure that sometime or other the US will appreciate the policy we have been pursuing. But for the present the difficulty remained. Some future development might bring

these respective policies into still sharper contrast. We had every wish to cooperate with the US, but we could not give up our independent policy in domestic or international spheres, if we considered that to be right. I wanted to make this perfectly clear to avoid any future misunderstanding. If we understood this position now, then it would be easier to cooperate in this economic aid programme as well as anything else. Mr Steere said that he completely understood the position and he was convinced that this difference in policy had no bearing whatever on this economic aid programme. Mr Acheson will agree to this. The US does not expect any such thing as our changing our policy for the sake of economic aid or under any such pressure.

13. Mr Steere said finally that he understood that we were prepared to accept the economic aid as envisaged and as for the other considerations that I had pointed out, in regard to wider questions of policy, he would make this clear to the State Department. He did not think that made any difference in this matter.

14. I asked him about the Food Bills before the Congress. He said that he hoped they will be passed in the course of the next week or so. He would like the necessary agreements etc, to be prepared so that they might take action immediately. If nothing untoward happened, the first food ships should leave the US about the middle of June and reach India about the middle of July.

15. As he was going away, he gave me a paper with the heading "Oral Statement". He spoke also about the contents of this paper which tried to explain the basic US policy of according economic aid to foreign countries. It dealt with the question of this aid meeting with misunderstanding and suspicion.

16. The basic reason, he told me, was that the United States for nearly 30 years had had an excessively favourable balance of payment with the rest of the world. In fact, since World War I, the US balance of payments had been favourable by something like 100 billion dollars. They had tried to cover this by gold imports of some 20 million dollars, by US capital investments abroad, and by grants in aid to foreign countries, the latter initiated after World War II. In fact, in view of this tremendous favourable balance, the US had no choice left but to make gifts. Their attempts to give loans previously between the two World Wars had failed. The loans simply lapsed and nobody paid them back. So now they had decided to give gifts instead, which were more effective in achieving their purpose and cause them less all round difficulty than loans. It was because of this that the State Department had preferred the idea of food being sent here as a gift rather than as a loan.

21. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

New Delhi
June 2, 1951

Nan dear,

I have just received your letter of the 23rd May.² A few days ago Bajpai mentioned to me that the State Department has been urging you to come to India. My reaction then was that it would not be right for you to come to India for any consultations, as suggested by the State Department. I do not know what the State Department expect to come out of such consultations. You have kept us fully informed of the position in the US and we are otherwise also fairly well acquainted with it. No doubt you could tell us something more. The fact is that US policy impresses us less and less. Our view of US policy is not likely to change because of consultations and US policy is not likely to change either.

This was my first reaction and I confess that that reaction continues. I shall however give further thought to this matter and consult some colleagues here. I am going to Srinagar tomorrow morning for two or three days.³ On my return, I shall write to you again.

Of course I would like you, for personal reasons, to come here.⁴ But I have to judge of this matter apart from personal reasons.

Since I wrote to you last about your own future programme, I have taken it for granted that you will be coming back to India sometime in the autumn or early winter. I decided this because of your own desire. Also because I felt that you had been away from India for a long time and a spell of India will be good from every point of view. Otherwise one gets out of touch with the whole country. Later, it might be possible for you to go abroad again. Your present letter suggests that you might be able to stay there for a few months longer. Perhaps this might be desirable and we shall think about it. Much depends on your own views and convenience.

1. JN Collection.
2. Vijayalakshmi Pandit wrote that for some weeks various people at the State Department had been hinting to her to "go home for consultations" and that "it was important for personal talks to take the place of letters and telegrams", "for the relations", it was believed, "between the USA and India are more important than most things." "On every plane", they added, they had "a problem" and all their departments were handicapped because of the incomplete nature of the information which reached India and which was responsible for many departmental decisions.
3. Accompanied by Indira Gandhi, Sri Prakasa, R.R. Diwakar and Mahavir Tyagi, Nehru reached Srinagar on 3 June 1951 on a two-day visit.
4. She further enquired if Nehru wanted her to stay in India for a few extra months and whether she could have a month's leave combined with the consultations or without them.

You will be sorry to learn that Purnima Banerjee died suddenly in Naini Tal two days ago. She has of course been unwell for a long time, but no one expected her to die. I met her about a month ago.

With love from
Jawahar

22. Food from the United States¹

The Government of India is grateful to the US Government and Congress in passing this legislation and thus coming to the aid of India when such help is most needed and welcomed.²

With this substantial help in the coming months, it will be much easier now for the Government of India and our State Governments to control the food situation effectively and gradually bring about normality.

The US Government and Congress have undoubtedly reflected the views of the vast majority of American citizens in giving this welcome aid. As a matter of fact, I have received innumerable letters from citizens of the United States expressing their sympathy and desire for help on this occasion and I am deeply grateful to them. I should like also to express my gratitude especially to the Emergency Food Committee formed in America which helped so much in placing the facts of the situation in India before the American public.

I am sure that this generous gesture of the American people will evoke friendly responses in India and bring the two peoples nearer to one another.

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 12 June 1951. From the *National Herald*, 13 June 1951.
2. A compromise Bill was passed by the Senate on 11 June, after prior approval by the House of Representatives. The legislation, authorizing a \$190,000,000 loan to India for the purchase of 2,000,000 tons of American grain, was signed on 15 June by President Truman, who stated that American grain was being shipped to Indian ports at the rate of 2,50,000 tons a month, and appealed to voluntary agencies in the USA to aid India by supplementing the relief made available to that country by Congress.

23. To Dorothy Norman¹

New Delhi
June 25, 1951

My dear Dorothy,

Thank you for your long letter of June 1st. I shall try to explain briefly how the situation arose to which you refer.

When I was in America,² I took up the general attitude of my visit being a friendly one and not directly concerned with any talks of aid to India. I said at the same time that we would welcome American help in our various schemes for recovery. For the rest, it was for our officers there to discuss these matters in detail; that is to say, I tried to keep above and outside political and economic matters and made my approach, as far as I could, on the friendly psychological plane.

In private talks with the President and Dean Acheson, I added that we would welcome American help. Naturally, I said that we wanted to carry on our domestic and international policy according to our lights, because we considered that right, and therefore we would not like any pressure to change that policy. We would always be prepared to discuss it and be convinced about a possible change. I was assured by the President and Mr Acheson that they had no intention of attaching any political strings. There the matter ended.

The immediate issue then was wheat for India. I suggested that we might be given a long-term credit on some deferred payment system, as we could not possibly pay for it within a short period. Acheson told me that this would require Congress sanction, but there might be ways of getting this through. There was at no time then a mention of the grant. I had no objection to a grant then or later.

Only on one occasion, when I was addressing a purely Indian audience on my arrival in New York, did I use the words (I was speaking in Hindustani) that I had not come to beg anything, but on a friendly visit to improve our relations. I added then that we would welcome American help. On no other occasion did I repeat these remarks so far as I remember.

During the early days of my stay I was given the impression that fairly rapid progress would be made about getting wheat on easy or deferred payment terms. I left the matter to our officers and financial advisers there to discuss. Gradually I found that nothing was being done and no progress was made. I was a little disappointed, but I thought perhaps this required more time and I told our representatives to carry on these conversations. As a matter of fact, subsequent reports to us from the United States were not encouraging. It seemed

1. JN Collection.

2. In October-November 1949.

that for some odd reason, that I could not understand, something had come in the way. In America it was stated repeatedly that we did not want any help. I made it perfectly clear to the US Ambassador here that this was a grave misunderstanding. We did require help of course and we would welcome it. I added that this should be apart from any political question. He assured me that, of course, it should be so.

So time passed and nothing was done for a considerable period and there was considerable disappointment in India, more especially when the situation here became worse owing to earthquakes, floods, drought, etc. We did not quite see what we could do in the matter because we had made several approaches, formal and informal, without any adequate results. We made yet another specific and formal approach to the State Department. We asked them for two million tons of foodgrains on easy terms. There was no mention of a grant, though of course we did not rule it out. It did not seem proper to us to ask for a grant. Informally, when this matter was mentioned to us, I said that we would have no objection to a grant.

The Bills were then introduced in Congress. Most of us here do not understand the procedure of Congress in such matters, and there was a good deal of confusion between the House Bill and the Senate Bill. As a matter of fact, we did not see these Bills for a considerable time. Much argument and debate was going on in the United States about this matter, especially in Congress, and we felt that we should remain quiet. When the Bills actually came to us in their original form, we were also told that they would have to be followed by certain agreements. Both the original Bills and the draft agreements contained provisions which came to us as a bit of a shock, because it was definitely stated in them that there would be supervision not only of the foodgrains sent from America, but of all our distribution system. Further, a reference to our supplying strategic materials, etc. There were some other provisions also which we did not like. We were put in a difficult position because we knew that our Parliament and our people would not like those stipulations. They would not have liked them anyhow. But their reaction was likely to be much stronger because of much that had been said in Congress in regard to these Bills. We had thus to face this position that certain suggestions and provisions in the Bills or the draft agreements could not be accepted by us without doing injury to what we had repeatedly said in Parliament in regard to our general policy. Thereupon, we pointed out to the State Department what our reactions were to those proposals and how we would like them changed. The State Department was appreciative of what we said, but expressed a certain helplessness because they could not control Congress. At a later stage, some changes were made. We had to make some kind of a statement. This was indeed desired by the State Department. It was then that I made the statement in Parliament to which you refer. In this statement I made it clear

that we were prepared to accept the Bills as they were, but we would prefer a loan on easy terms as embodied in the House Bill. The real fact was that, even at that stage, there were certain provisions in the Senate Bill and the draft agreement, which would be based upon it, which it was very difficult for us to get passed in our Parliament. My whole statement was in response to the State Department's request and to make the way clear in India. You have to face American opinion. Please remember that I have to face Indian opinion. The grant had certain provisions which were difficult for us to accept. The loan did not. Also we felt that there was likely to be much misunderstanding at a later stage, and possibly accusations against each other, if we accepted those conditions which went with the grant, even though they might not *prima facie* be objectionable. In the interests of Indo-American friendship, we did not wish this trail of argument and recriminations to follow. As a matter of fact, even in our later correspondence with the State Department, there was a good deal of misunderstanding.

So far as the ECA is concerned, we made it clear, independently of the food question, that we had no basic objection to it. But, always, we also made it clear, to avoid misunderstanding, that our domestic and international policy should not be affected. This might have been unnecessary, but we felt it was safer to repeat this, because in fact national policies have been affected by the ECA grants or loans in several countries. We arrived at our national policy after deep and searching thought. Unfortunately, it is not wholly in keeping with the US policy.

It was no easy matter for us, situated as we were, with large-scale famine approaching us, to take up this attitude. But this itself will make it clear to you how deeply we felt about it and how we were even prepared to take the risk of that famine, because the other risks seemed to us to be graver and more tragic still.

Throughout this period, there has been no doubt in my mind that President Truman and Mr Acheson were trying to do their best for us in the matter of food and we are very grateful to them. But, as stated by the State Department itself, they were not completely in control of the situation.

There was no question of my coming out against a grant at the last moment. But when we were definitely asked if we would agree to certain conditions, which we disliked, we had to give an answer and indicate our preference.

I have received through Hannah Sen³ a bundle of papers which your emergency food aid committee issued. But even before I received these papers, our Embassy in Washington kept me fully informed and spoke in the highest terms of the magnificent work that you and your committee were doing. I

need not tell you how very grateful we have been and are to you and your committee for this tremendous help. Indeed, I have expressed my gratitude to your committee in public on several occasions in India.

You say that people in India do not face facts. Perhaps so. But then facts are very complicated and facts may take a different shape or have a different appearance when looked at from different angles. We try to understand facts and, indeed, the facts bear down upon us and cannot be ignored. But we cannot get rid of our life-time way of looking at things and of the philosophy of life in public affairs that this has produced. We are struggling against great odds, and in another sense we struggled against them when we were up against the British. We tried to hold fast then to certain principles. Even now, what I am most afraid of is that under the stress of the moment we may lose grip of those principles.

I have been convinced for long and I am still convinced of the great necessity of India and America understanding each other in as large a measure as possible. Understanding does not mean agreement about everything. We have different backgrounds and the very nature of understanding is to understand that difference. It is unfortunately true that we in India, or most of us, do not have that understanding of the essential features of American life which we ought to have. In the same way, there is a singular lack of understanding in America of what we are and what we stand for. I have been trained to look at things in some historical perspective and not to allow myself to be submerged by the rush of events or the passion of the moment. I may be wrong of course. I have a feeling that in large parts of the world today logic and reason do not function; it is only passion and fear that function and govern our activities. I do not think much good can result from this.

I would personally like you very much to continue your committee which has already done so much good. It might even work in a larger sphere of bringing about a better understanding between our respective countries. I am quite certain that, even apart from the food problem, you and your committee have done enormous good to the relationship between India and America.

I have been feeling very tired and exhausted for some time past. I have at last decided to go away for about a week to a remote corner of the Himalayas where people and radio, newspapers and letters cannot pursue me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

BUILDING THE NATION

III. National Planning

(i) Planning and Resources

1. Labour Welfare Legislation¹

...Question: Sir, I pass on to Labour legislation.² The Government of India proposed to start a scheme of State insurance, profit-sharing, fair wages, minimum wages and all that. Keeping in view our drive for more production would you care to see that all these promises are acted upto in time?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I cannot say much individually about each of these pieces of legislation, except that we are trying to think of these matters not independently as we did previously but rather in an integrated way. Because one thing reacts on the other. Part of the delay is due to this, that previously—and I confess that fault was ours—we thought of these separately as desirable things, but a desirable thing may have undesirable consequences in some other sector of our economy. So we decided to consider them all together and the Planning Commission has been consulted. They have given a great deal of thought to it ie, what effect any measure may have in other spheres, on inflation and other matters. We would like to put forward these matters therefore in an integrated way.

Q: Sir, you might meet the challenge of the anti-social elements by bringing in a Preventive Detention Bill. How do you propose to meet the other challenge to the security of the State viz, higher prices, retrenchment and unemployment?

JN: These are problems that can only be considered by an integrated approach—by some planned schemes or by punishing anti-social elements on either side.

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 13 March 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 67-69, 153, 295, 355-356, 361-366, 443-445, 482-484, 502-505.
2. Under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, it was obligatory upon appropriate Governments to fix minimum rates of wages before 15 March 1950. This, however, was not done by many Governments. So an Ordinance was promulgated to legalise the steps taken. The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948, was designed to provide for certain benefits to employees in case of sickness, maternity and injury during employment. The Factories Act of 1948 contained detailed directions regarding wealth, safety and welfare of workers in factories. The Trade Union Bill and the Labour Relations Bill were before Parliament in 1951.

2. Basic Social Objectives¹

Mr President,² Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

You, Sir, Mr President, have referred to a multitude of problems in your address and presented a judicious mixture of commending some activities of the Government,³ criticising others⁴ and offering advice,⁵ so that we might perhaps function better in your opinion than we have so far done. We welcome your advice and the advice of others presented with good intentions and with a view to improve the conditions of the country, and anything that you or your organization says will naturally be attended to and thought over and considered.

You will not expect me to deal with those various matters which you have discussed. In regard to some, we are pursuing more or less definite policies; in regard to others, they are under consideration. So, for me at this moment to go into the discussion of those matters will hardly serve much purpose. Perhaps, it would be more suitable to the occasion if I spoke to you about some rather more basic matters, wider matters, because after all we have to be clear in our minds about those basic social motives, social objectives. And unless we are clear in our own minds, we are apt to change our minds quickly, repeatedly, and not be sure of any action that we might take.

You will permit me to say something which I ought not to do, and that is to confess that in the course of the last few years we have not been able to be clear as to where we are going. That is to say, in the immediate present, we

1. Speech at the twenty-fourth annual session of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi, 31 March 1951. JN Papers, NMML.
2. Tulsidas Kilachand was the outgoing President.
3. Referring to the "dark international background", Tulsidas said the personality of Nehru and the stand taken by him were etched in bold relief.
4. Tulsidas said that keeping in view the import of 4 million tons of foodgrains during the year, the Government had not been very successful in making the agriculturist realise the benefits of using improved methods and techniques. He added that he could not understand how a huge development plan could be financed, and regretted the divergent policies pursued by the State Governments, which nullified greatly the policies of the Central Government.
5. Tulsidas suggested that prices and other controls should be relaxed and conditions favourable to increased production created so as to break "the vicious circle of scarcity leading to controls and controls perpetuating scarcity." To expand the activities of Government and private enterprise there should be closer liaison between the chambers of commerce and the industrial and trade associations with the authorities at the various levels. A high-powered taxation enquiry body was necessary "for a scientific revision of the tax structure of the country."

might have been clear about any step and in the broader aspects of distant policy we might also have been clear, vaguely clear. Nevertheless, there is an enormous field between the two, about which in these changing circumstances there is a great deal of difference of opinion in the country and among those who have given thought to it.

The fact of the matter is that whether it is in India or any other country, vast and new social forces are at work, generated because of various causes and reasons but certainly and principally because of tremendous technological changes that go on taking place, generated by political changes, say, in our country, in Asia, by political urges, social urges generated as a result of those political changes by a new consciousness coming to vast numbers of people and a new desire not to submit to much that they have submitted to in the past. So, you see all these social forces at play and social conflicts taking place, sometimes resulting or rather leading to international conflicts on a major scale. You see great nations following economic policies which differ from each other very greatly. You see others somewhere between two differing policies. Now, which one is correct? Obviously, any answer to that cannot be a merely theoretical answer; it has to be a practical answer in relation to the circumstances of a particular country.

We in our country may have a certain theoretical approach to problems but that theoretical approach does little good unless it is related to the practical aspect of affairs, unless it really comes out of a study of the practical conditions, objectives, etc, so that you have to apply, if I may say so, the idealistic approach with a practical consideration of the problems prevailing in that country at that particular time. Now, in considering various problems as you have done you apply from your experience and your ways of thinking practical tests to some problems of the day and coming as it does from you it is important for us to consider and give thought to it.

Nevertheless, you will permit me to say that your approach may be a very limited approach and your approach may derive much more from a certain static position in the past or might flow from the way you have functioned in the past, and not so much from an appreciation of a changing dynamic situation. Towards the end of your address, you referred to various objectives⁶ that we have in general terms and I suppose many of us would agree with that, some may go further, some may not go even so far.

To say that we want greater wealth, higher standards of living, greater production, that is, I take it, common ground. How to achieve it and how to

6. Tulsidas said that it was essential to arouse popular enthusiasm in order that Government's policies might be translated into action, since it was the people who ultimately "delivered the goods."

achieve it not merely in some mechanical sense but in a social sense also. It is really absurd to talk of high standards in India where sometimes the lowest are lacking. We must have those basic standards, basic necessities and then we may think of higher standards.

Nevertheless, there is such a thing (I do not know how to define it) — the social condition of the organism or the individual or the group. Frankly speaking, when I see some very highly developed nations of the world, I admire them. I want to copy many of their methods and all that, and yet a fear steals into my mind lest I grow like them because there are things there which I think are not good for the individual or the group, because this very thing that has brought wealth and prosperity to the entire world, that is, the growth of technology, industrialisation and the rest—and may I say, in passing, that I am all in favour of industrialisation of India. I am not speaking in any other terms—yet the growth of this has brought about the gradual and progressive turning of the human being into a machine, and I think that that is a very dangerous thing. You get the machine in man's normal functions and avocations; you even get the machine mind which cannot think except in the narrow grooves laid out for it; you get large groups thinking along certain ways.

That is helped by a variety of processes including to some extent the functioning of modern methods of propaganda and all that, so that in the ultimate analysis while you make great progress on certain planes—and that progress is necessary and desirable and must be achieved—you lose something which, I think, perhaps is very valuable and very precious. Now, must one pay the price of progress by losing that something or can we retain it and have both? Because you cannot really retain the other things that, as I said, are very precious, unless you have that material progress also.

It is quite absurd to talk of various forms of progress for any large group when that group suffers from lack of the ordinary necessities of life. That cannot be done. So this problem comes in a basic way and I think personally that most of our world's ills today leading us to the verge of a terrible war are in the final analysis due to this growth of technology in a peculiarly narrow way. In the old days people were backward compared to today, but one had a sense of an integrated human life, a sense of balance. Today one has a sense of complete lack of balance in the individual, the group or the nations.

Of course, wise men apart—there are always wise men everywhere—we get highly qualified men in their special domains, very efficient and delivering the goods in their special domains, but taken out of their particular groove, almost completely ignorant of life and its ways, not even knowing the most elementary facts of life, as perhaps some simple persons might know them. So that while this excessive specialisation and technological development does

obviously lead to the larger good of humanity in many ways, a doubt creeps into my mind whether it is not undermining humanity also at the same time in some form or other, undermining by lowering the quality of the mind and the spirit and obviously undermining it by producing tendencies of self-killing and *harakiri* on a large scale as we wish to do.

This is rather a distant consideration that I wish to place before you because that leads us to think that today in the world—anywhere in the world, I would say, but let us think of India—there is a complete lack of balance about things. We are not living in a balanced world; we are not certainly living in a balanced India. There is complete lack of balance here. The fault may be Government's; may be anybody's. For the moment let us forget whose fault it is; it may be the fault of all of us, but the fact is that there is a lack of balance. Our Finance Minister may seek some financial balancing about this thing or that, about how much imports and exports there must be and about sterling balances. That is all right; that has to be done and wisely done, but the real lack of balance is more basic and it is affecting not only our economic life, but our political life and our international life.

How are we to find that balance in the world, in India, that equilibrium which is not merely a question of accountancy and accounting? It is something deeper than that. We tend to think of these things from an accountant's point of view; the accountant's point of view cannot be ignored naturally whether in business or in other undertakings, but the accountant's point of view is a narrow point of view, where human life is concerned. So, how are we to find that equilibrium and that balance? Well, we cannot take control of the whole world. It is too big a job for us. India is big enough. What are we to do about it in India? Well, I am not going to provide an answer, but one thing is clear to me that whatever the answer may be, it cannot be even provided, much less given effect to by a governmental decree.

It is too big a problem, it is too big a job for a Government consisting even of all the wisest men to give effect to. Obviously Government must give the lead in such a matter. But in order to be effective it must have, as you yourself said, Sir, public cooperation in a very large degree. Public cooperation of all kinds.

Then I come up against this difficulty—public cooperation in what? What is the public? You said "people" repeatedly. Who are the people? Are those eminent men and women sitting here who represent very important elements in our national life, are they the people you are thinking of and I am thinking of? One could, I have no doubt, gather other people equally eminent in other walks of life who may have different viewpoints. Then who are the people? How are we to bring them together, these various viewpoints and differing approaches to these problems?

Well, I suppose it is not possible to get everyone to agree. In the ultimate analysis what will happen in this country, as in other countries, are certain cleavages of opinion—call them on party lines, call them what you like—representing different economic approaches. They need not necessarily come into conflict with each other all the time. I do not mean that. People have different approaches and they have a right to have them and to hammer a solution out of the different approaches. If they seek, even while differing on certain matters, they can agree and cooperate to a large extent. But the problem remains. We seek public cooperation or the people's cooperation. For what purpose do we seek it? And when we lay down the purpose each group has different views about that purpose.

You may of course say in normal times it does not so much matter, because even if mistakes are made that does not very much matter, and we hammer out this policy or that policy. But it is rather important in times of crisis or emergency what one does. One has sometimes to be a little ruthless; in times of a crisis or emergency you cannot go about knocking at every man's doorstep and asking his opinion, when a thing has to be done next minute or the next hour; otherwise the crisis may overwhelm us.

In times of war, the country functions in a particular way and in times of peace in a different way. So in times of war it is even more necessary to have that public cooperation than in times of peace. So we get this that just at a time when urgent decisions and quick action are necessary and when people's opinion may differ considerably as to the action, it is at that very time that the largest measure of support is necessary. Well, we are not living at the present moment in times of acute war.

Yet, distressing wars are going on though they are on a small scale. But, we continue to live in near-war conditions all over the world and though we hope that war will not come to us in the near future, the conditions are such that to some extent we have to think in terms of war, stock-piling in terms of war—you have mentioned stock-piling business. So near-war conditions are produced and the fear of the approaching possible war grips us. That is bad enough and everything emanating from that, and apart from that, come other problems which we have to face.

There can be no doubt that we in India, as many people as in other countries, live in a period of crisis, in a period of emergency. Whether we are big enough to face it adequately or not is another matter. And yet in spite of everything I find a strange lack of awareness of this fact. Even those who criticize Government strongly, even the tone and the manner of their bitter criticism lacks urgency. In fact, if I may say so, an urgent thing does not take hours to tell. A crisis requires action, requires swift statement, and a swift reply. It does not require long speeches.



WITH THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO, NEW DELHI, 22 MARCH 1951



IN THE FLOOD-AFFECTED AREAS IN BIHAR, 19 JUNE 1951

Now, I find this lack of appreciation of the crisis and there is a crisis in India today, political, economic, psychological, every kind of crisis, international or national. I do not find this appreciation in the whole speech. It is about time that this country recognises this, that we live in a time of crisis, a deep crisis. I am not mentioning this word repeatedly to frighten you; I am not frightened of it but to make you aware that something more than the casual talks and discussions that you do is necessary and that any Government may have to act swiftly and sternly because of this crisis in any part of India or the whole of India at any time and we should be prepared for it. And you must be also prepared for this that any Government that you may choose, Government like this, if it has to function adequately must have the support of the country. Otherwise what will you have? You may have what you see in other countries, unstable Governments, weak Governments which may not function properly, which even when they are very good, or wise Governments, just cannot be effective Governments. And it is a very bad thing for a country in such times to have these weak and unstable Governments. It does not really matter to me, I am quite honest, what Government you have, but it is absolutely essential that any effective Government which can decide and act swiftly, should control the destinies of any country at the time of crisis.

This crisis will not go quickly or soon. Fortunately, in a few months' time the country will have an opportunity of choosing any Government it wants to. I hope they will choose a stable Government whatever Government it may be, not a weak Government. Now, if ultimately many of the problems that we face have deeper causes than can be dealt with by, if I may say so again, by accounting methods, then we should study them, analyse them, and understand them. We should understand not only the deeper causes in the wide world but the psychology of our own people. All of us are too apt—and I am also a sinner like others—too apt to advise others and not to learn from our people, as to how they are and what their needs and urges are. Well, that is to some extent inevitable and we cannot help it.

Nevertheless, one has to understand the psychological background apart from the economic and political. Psychology means a good deal and however right we may think ourselves to be, a great deal depends on how and what others are feeling about the course of events. And if they feel that things are going wrong, then even the satisfaction that we are doing right is not enough.

So we come back to this: How are we to evolve a proper policy, a proper solution of our social objectives, etc. I should say apart from that, the only right way to do it from the governmental point of view is through the way of what is normally known as the Planning Commission. Now, what is the Planning Commission? I do not understand why people go on thinking in terms of a Planning Commission as if it was a grandiose body making wild

schemes for which we may or may not have resources. You yourself have urged in your references to it in this way.

I have said more than once that that is a wrong conception. A Planning Commission has no business to make any grandiose schemes at any time. A Planning Commission must always make schemes which can be given effect to, which are practical more or less. The need for a Planning Commission becomes most urgent when you cannot make big schemes. The need for a Planning Commission is how to utilise the resources to the best advantage and not to waste them. I say today if there was no Planning Commission in India functioning today, I would despair. The fact that—whether it does anything or not—the mere fact of eminent men, not troubled by daily difficulties of administration, eminent men trying to look at the whole picture, their colleagues discussing with members of Government, members of industry and with labour, that fact, that approach, I say, is the only correct approach. If those men are not good enough, then we fail. But that is the only approach.

It is no longer possible and no longer right for all the Chambers of Commerce of the world to tell us that they will give us the direction, for all the labour unions to tell us that they will give direction. That is no longer right. The sooner you realise that, the better.

You talk about private enterprise.⁷ Well, we have private enterprise in this country; of course, we encourage it, and all that. We talk about the private sector and the public sector, and all that. And I think when you come down to grips with the subject from a practical point of view, you consider any particular problem, there is not usually too much difference if there is earnestness. That is important because if I may say so from the reports I have read and heard, the Planning Commission in dealing with some of our problems with representatives of Indian industry and commerce, representatives of labour in India, have met with far greater success sometimes than we might have expected, simply because the people who got together were earnest in finding a way out. Or rather when they begin to realise that however much their personal interest may be concerned with it, that very interest will go down when the common interest goes down. When individual interests get allied with public interest to some extent then results are achieved as when in wartime a nation thinks that if we are defeated we go down and therefore each person subordinates his private interest to some extent to the public good; to save the country's freedom or to defend the country—that one thing becomes dominant.

If that feeling becomes dominant not only from the idealistic point of view but from the point of view of personal interest—a feeling that my individual interest is involved in saving the country from going down—then

7. Tulsidas had said that there should be no discrimination between privately owned concerns and Government enterprises and they should be treated equally in every respect.

results are achieved. So I feel that it is possible for a large measure of agreement to be arrived at, not in discussing theories but in discussing problems and in laying down certain basic approaches and basic objectives.

It is obvious that in the world today you cannot have the type of objective that perhaps actuated the nineteenth century in the West. You cannot have it anywhere. We may be in the nineteenth century phase of growth in regard to industry; that is a different matter. We may be backward in industry, but social objectives have changed in the world. We cannot bring about that social outlook which prevailed in the UK a hundred years ago. We just can't do it; nobody will tolerate it.

There is often a discussion about private enterprise and public enterprise. That discussion itself seems to be rather theoretical unless we apply it to particular problems. If you look at the world today even countries that stand hundred per cent for private enterprise are by a strange evolution changing over and fairly rapidly, not by law, but facts gradually shift in almost all other countries.

In almost every country of Europe there is a deliberate change-over going on and ultimately it becomes a question of the pace of change, of the emphasis on this or that which can only be judged in the world context by the problems of a particular country which you are discussing. Now, therefore, in discussing all these problems—individual problems that you have mentioned—we have to have some measure by which to judge, some balance how to weigh our policies from the point of view of the social objective.

It is not enough, I say, merely to produce unless you know exactly how you produce and where what you produce is likely to go. It was in the early nineteenth century or the late eighteenth century that there was this growth of modern industrialism when a great deal was produced and the people in England who produced were not men who spent their money in luxury. They lived a hard life; it was almost a religion with them to save money for development. To develop the country, they lived simple abstemious lives, but in saving for the country they used their workers in a way which nobody can conceive today as tolerable.

It was most amazing—the conditions in the early 19th century that existed in England but they did thereby lay the foundations of a certain saving process which went on for the development of England. If England had to do it today, it could not do it, because social objectives have changed and you have to approach the problem in a different way. So it becomes necessary to view these questions—whether it is controls or whether it is other problems—in this wider framework.

I just mentioned controls. Obviously nobody is going to say that controls are good in themselves and should be kept on and pursued. At the same time I think that nobody is prepared to say that whatever happens there should be

no controls. If that is the position, then it is a question of examining when and where controls are necessary and which control is necessary. Again, the social objective will come in, as well as other possible consequences of your imposing controls or taking them off.

For instance, it is my firm opinion that one of the fatal steps that my Government took was the removal of control on cloth two or three years ago. It was a dangerous thing and had dangerous consequences and I am not prepared to face those consequences again. If those consequences go on, the whole social structure would tumble down. Of course, controls are hateful things; they encourage corruption and all that. I should like to do away with them, but I am not prepared to see starvation and nakedness in large parts of India for the sake of some theoretical idea that without controls, gradually we will settle down. Gradually we may settle down, but gradually we may be dead too, most of us. It is not a prospect which any Government dare face.

Therefore, I would like you to consider in this connection and in any other connection that any policy, that you may undertake and adopt or recommend, economic or political, cannot be judged from that static viewpoint which one might have accepted some years ago. Because the whole circumstances have changed and are now different. We live continually—in every country in the world—on the verge of economic or political volcanoes and it may well be that something, some policy that might have been profitable or at any rate could not have produced disastrous results some years ago, if followed now, may produce such repercussions not perhaps on the purely economic field but social repercussions, as to shake the whole social structure which you and we all represent.

Now in regard to that matter I would not of course challenge your capacity to appreciate these various problems, but you will permit me to say that I represent a certain expert knowledge. I may go wrong completely in the economic field or the political field, but I represent a certain expert knowledge of the psychological field of India and of the Indian people. And I can feel, I can sense, and I can see it, in spite of my living apart for the past four or five years. My previous contacts were so intimate with the Indian masses that I can somehow sense what they feel even by looking at a crowd of 50,000 or 100,000, for it has been my exceeding good fortune to have had the affection of the Indian people.

Even when they thought that I had acted wrongly they gave me their love and affection and there can be no more precious gift than that. It has been a very great burden on me that people should be so enormously gracious and kind to me but that I should not be able to discharge my responsibilities adequately and to bring them the relief which they desire and richly deserve. And so I try to consult my colleagues, and try to find the way forward. But I

am convinced whatever that way may be, there is no going forward very far without the largest measure of cooperation among our people.

You ladies and gentlemen, who represent trade, industry, commerce and other walks of life, and principally the large masses of the people of this country will ultimately make it or unmake it. And I want you, and I therefore appeal to you to extend your well considered cooperation. I ask nobody not to criticize our Government or its doings, but I do wish you and others to appreciate the crisis and the emergency that we are living in, not a brief one, but a long-distance one.

Humanity is passing through a crisis, and realising it you tune yourself upto it and think in such terms as you would if India were suddenly attacked tomorrow. I am not expecting an attack tomorrow, don't be misled. But suppose India was attacked tomorrow, we shall have to struggle. How would you feel then? Would we discuss all kinds of secondary problems and be picking holes here and there and spend a lot of time in long arguments? We would try to get at the base of things, come together, decide what to do in a state of emergency, and do it. It wouldn't matter very much, if somebody lost something, if somebody gained something, provided we achieved what we wanted. That is the spirit with which I would like you and the country to face our problems, and that is the spirit in which I want the Planning Committee to face them and to produce something as rapidly as possible which can be a kind of nucleus for our actions, for the people to come together, all classes and groups to confer together, and then to move forward jointly together. Thank you.

BUILDING THE NATION

III. National Planning

(ii) Kosi

1. To C.D. Deshmukh¹

June 4, 1951

My dear Deshmukh,

You have sprung a surprise upon me, not a pleasant one.² I am sorry that I gave you cause to think that I had acted unconstitutionally or bypassed you and the Planning Commission. That certainly was not my intention. Indeed it never struck me. But I was very powerfully impressed by the near-famine situation in Bihar and felt that it would be of great help in dealing with it if we could start, even in a small way, work on the early stage of the Kosi project. That early stage, for a year and a half or even two years, need not make any vital demand on central funds. At every stage I made it clear that we could make no substantial commitment. It is true of course that some kind of a moral commitment results but even that was strictly limited in scope. It is also true that from the larger planning point of view, everything has to be seen together and not separately. I felt that the human problem and the urgent necessity of providing hope of work was so great and the financial risks involved so very limited that we might give an indication that we would start work. That announcement itself was an important factor in raising the morale of the people.

The position in Bihar is difficult and is not met simply by sending foodgrains. We distributed part of these free—is it not better to give work instead? This difficulty will not end soon—we shall have to carry on for a considerable time if Bihar is to be rehabilitated.

The figures given to me about flood control were supplied by Khosla.³ I have talked to him again and confirmed them. I thought he ought to know. As for the technical and financial examination of the scheme, this of course has to be done, though the technical aspect becomes relatively unimportant if only the early stages are taken up.

1. C.D. Deshmukh Papers, NMML.

2. In his letter to Nehru on 29 May 1951, Deshmukh offered to resign from his post of Finance Minister as a protest against the unconstitutional procedure he (Nehru) had adopted by announcing the Government's decision that the Kosi project would be started and its first three stages would be carried out as rapidly as possible, without prior consultation with him as the Finance Minister and the Planning Commission. In his view the finances were so fully extended for the next two years that there was no scope for any additional major commitment like the Kosi project. According to Deshmukh, the project, in its initial stages, would serve as a famine relief work and Bihar Government could find some other suitable work in its place.

3. A.N. Khosla was the Chairman of the Central Waterways, Irrigation, and Navigation Commission at this time.

I have written a separate note on the Kosi which I am sending you separately. I am sending a copy to the Planning Commission also. The figures in this note are supplied by Khosla. I have asked him to send us a fuller note on the same lines.

As far as I can see any commitment on our part is the smallest and even that is dependent on certain factors.

You have a feeling that I have ignored you in this matter. That of course was never my intention, the constitutional aspect apart. But have you not dealt with me rather ungenerously in writing to me as you have done and coming to a conclusion. If I had erred it was right for you to point it out to me and for us to have a talk about the matter. I hope to meet you soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Importance of the Kosi Project¹

During my visit to Bihar I visited the Kosi area and had discussions with the Bihar Government. This Kosi project has become one which obsesses the minds of large numbers of people in Bihar. The floods and the damage caused by these Kosi floods are an annual occurrence and they seem to get worse year after year. I myself saw some of these floods, although the monsoon has hardly begun, and the water really was snow-fed. In another month's time the position would be much worse.

We have considered this Kosi project on many occasions and realised its importance. But we hesitated to go ahead with it because of the large sums involved. The entire project is estimated to cost Rs 177 crores. This is split up in seven stages. The principal item of expenditure is on the dam, which is said to be the highest in the world.

In this project the Nepal Government is also interested, apart from the Bihar Government, and both these Governments have undertaken to provide Rs 2 crores each.

The annual damage from the Kosi floods is considerable. Even the amount spent annually by the Bihar Government in giving some kind of relief is considerable. Hence, it does appear to me to be important that we should take this matter in hand immediately.

1. Note to Gulzari Lal Nanda, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, 21 June 1951. JN Collection.

I have discussed this question with our experts here and they tell me that, quite apart from the dam, the earlier stages of this project are themselves worthwhile and paying. This would produce hydro-electric power both for Nepal and Bihar, large areas for cultivation, and give protection from floods to the extent of at least 60%. All this would give great relief and would not involve us in the heavy expenditure which the later stages of the scheme envisage. We can easily go ahead with the first stage with the money which the Nepal and Bihar Governments have promised to give us. In the present financial year no allocation from our central funds appears to be necessary, but in the next financial year it would be desirable to have some allocation, exactly how much I do not yet know. But this is not to be very considerable and part of the Bihar and Nepal money would help us in the next financial year also.

Taking all this matter into consideration I have come to the conclusion that we should immediately go ahead with the first phase of the Kosi project, and I have informed our Ministry of Natural Resources and Scientific Research as well as the Nepal and Bihar Governments accordingly. In informing these two Governments I have reminded them that they will have to pay us the money promised Rs 1 crore each during this financial year and the remaining crore from each Government during the next financial year.

This work has to be started on a full scale in October immediately after the monsoon. But meanwhile, some work can be done and materials can be collected. This has another advantage. Owing to unemployment in that area of Bihar and nearby and lack of purchasing power, it is important that we should start public works. The Kosi project, even in its initial stages, might be able to employ a considerable number of people. Psychologically, this will have a powerful effect in Bihar, and practically it will also be something really worthwhile.

I am sending you this note so that you might keep this project in view in your five-years' plan.² For the present you need only think of the first three stages. It may be possible for us to go further ahead later if our resources increase.

I might mention that there was some talk by some Americans of a loan for the Kosi project. This is rather vague, but still it is a possibility.

2. The draft outline report, submitted by the National Planning Commission on 9 July 1951, was divided into three parts. The first part explained its approach to planning, the second presented the salient features of the Five Year Plan and the third part dealt with problems of policy and administration.

3. To Gulzari Lal Nanda¹

New Delhi
June 25, 1951

My dear Gulzari Lal,

Thank you for your letter of the 25th about the Kosi project.

I looked upon this project especially from the point of view of giving employment to a large number of persons locally. I was given to understand that from October onwards over 10,000 persons can be employed in digging canals, etc. I forget the exact number, but I think later it went up to double this figure. Khosla sent me a note today which I think I sent back. You can get more information from him.

In the early stages, apart from constructing a short railway and some housing, most of the work will be digging and barrage construction (not the dam) which comes later and which is very expensive. It seems to me that we should give up entirely for the present at least, the idea of the dam. But the first three stages will bring definite results and employ large numbers of people. Apart from this, the annual damage done by the Kosi is tremendous. The psychological damage is even greater. For this reason, the Kosi has become an obsession with large numbers of Biharis. To tell them that we are beginning with it is to lighten their minds. I mentioned this to the President today and his pleasure was manifest.

From your note it appears that the Gandak project is perhaps more useful from the food production point of view. But practically and psychologically, I do not think it is anywhere near as important as the Kosi. Kosi strikes the imagination not only of people in Bihar but of foreigners also. I think we should certainly go ahead with the first two stages of Kosi immediately. This will mean some provision, not very much I think, next year. It is in the third year that we shall have to find some more money. We expect two crores from Nepal. The enormous commitment for the Kosi is really for the dam which, for the moment, we are giving up. I think it would be possible to get foreign help for the Kosi.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

BUILDING THE NATION**III. National Planning****(iii) The Penicillin Project**

1. A Penicillin Project in India¹

Nehru started the discussion by saying that the previous discussions on the subject of a tie up with Mercks and alternatively a tie up with WHO/UNICEF had revealed a divergence of viewpoints. One of those viewpoints represented the European approach which favoured socialisation of the manufacture of drugs and medicines. The other approach which was based on the American viewpoint represented what might be called the commercial outlook. He felt that, subject to what the members of the Penicillin Committee might have to say, there were several considerations in favour of the former viewpoint, namely:

1. While it was true that the American method of production was probably the most effective from the point of view of quality as well as quantity, it seemed to him that if the work was entrusted to WHO/UNICEF there might be a slight delay in catching up with the latest methods. But the delay would not probably be material.

2. Discussions which he had with various people, including Sir Edward Mellanby,² made him feel that a tie up with a commercial firm in America might bring in undesirable political results.

3. Financially the assistance of 1,200,000 dollars promised by WHO/UNICEF was a sizeable sum for us and deserved our consideration because it reduced our capital cost. If as a result of this tie up with WHO/UNICEF we came to grief, we might then go in a different direction.

4. The way things had developed, we might have to break up with WHO/UNICEF altogether if we did not avail ourselves of this offer, and that might give rise to difficulties in spheres other than that of penicillin production.

5. These were difficulties which were difficult to ignore, and should be borne in mind by all those present.

1. Remarks at a meeting of the Penicillin Committee, 19 March 1951. File No 17(116)/48-PMS.

2. (1884-1955); Secretary, British Medical Research Council, 1933-49.

2. Nature of the Penicillin Project¹

...In a way, I have been connected with these various proposals for sometime past and have often participated in conferences and discussions.

2. In the course of these discussions not only with some of my colleagues in the Cabinet but also with representatives of the Bombay Government, the Penicillin Committee, WHO and UNICEF, a variety of problems have been discussed with some thoroughness. I do not think it is necessary to cover all this ground again, even though there might still be some slight difference of opinion in regard to them.

3. One of the subjects discussed at some length has been that of patents. I do not think this offers any real difficulty and in any event, as pointed out in the WPS's summary, our law will give us full authority to use any patents. It is contended on behalf of WHO that patents do not come in the way at all and if any one or two of them are to be used, this can be done on payment of the normal royalty.

4. There is a difference between patents and secret processes. A patent is public, but its use is restricted sometimes by law. It can be used on payment. Secret processes are not patented because the moment they are patented, they cease to be secret. They are jealously guarded. But probably it is not easy to keep them secret for long and rival manufactures manage to get to know them. Even when a patent or a secret process is known and can be used, the manner or experience in using it, or the knowhow is important.

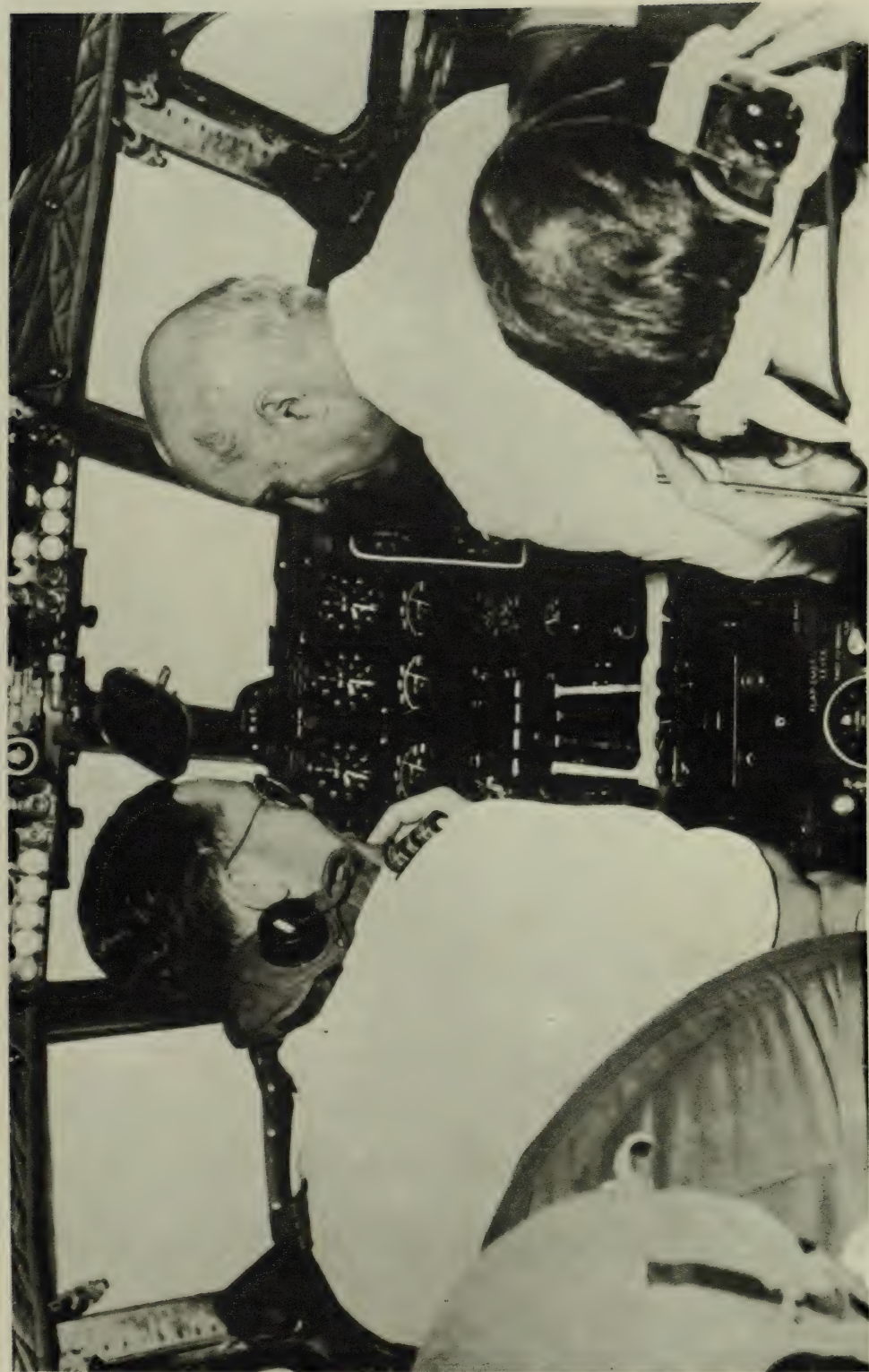
5. It is not correct to refer to any part of the funds to be provided by UNICEF or WHO as a loan. The condition is that penicillin worth \$850,000 should be freely distributed to women and children in India. This can be done in the course of some years. Even without this condition, this would be a desirable thing to do and indeed we do it to some extent already in our hospitals, etc.

6. There is no condition attached to the WHO/UNICEF offer to the effect that technical aid should not be sought from a manufacturer. The condition is that the factory should work without trying to preserve any secret processes. It should in fact be an international centre where people can come and learn and utilise their knowledge later on. It is true that this would come in the way of utilising, by arrangement with a commercial firm, a secret process, because that arrangement would insist upon the process being kept secret from others. Hence, others could not be taught this process.

1. Note to Ministers of WPS and Health, 23 April 1951. File No 17(116)/48-PMS. Extracts.



FLYING OVER THE FLOOD-AFFECTED AREAS IN BIHAR, 20 JUNE 1951



VIEWING OF THE KOSI RIVER PROJECT, 20 JUNE 1951

7. Our Penicillin Committee has been and is strongly in favour of our tying up with Mercks. The Bombay Government representatives, Dr Gilder² and Dr Jivraj Mehta, have also expressed themselves in favour of this and presumably are still of the same opinion. It is a possibility that if we decide in favour of the WHO/UNICEF proposal, the Bombay Government might be no longer interested in it and might want to apply their available resources to some other scheme, probably one dealing solely with the chemical industry.

8. Minor difficulties can be got over easily once the major decision is made by us. That major decision is as to whether we should favour a tie up with Mercks or collaboration with WHO/UNICEF. I think it is hardly feasible to think of two penicillin factories.

9. Thus, if we have a penicillin factory at all, there should be only one and we might proceed on the assumption that the capital expenditure involved will be 200 lakhs for penicillin only and 350 lakhs for the manufacture of penicillin, atabrine and sulpha drugs.

10. There is a possibility (I do not know how far this is feasible) of the penicillin project being separated from the remaining parts of this scheme, namely sulpha drugs and anti-malarials, which could be linked up with a DDT scheme. This has been suggested.

11. The issue before us thus becomes fairly simple. We have to take a decision between two proposals: (1) Mercks (2) WHO/UNICEF, as they stand. There is no question now at this stage of our negotiating further for a variation of the proposals made. The matter has been kept pending long enough and both parties want an early decision.

12. There is no doubt that Mercks are a top-ranking firm and it can be assumed that a factory they put up is likely to yield the results they claim in regard to quantity and quality produced. It is probable, though not certain, that WHO and UNICEF might not, at the beginning at least, come up to that mark either in quality or quantity. This is not admitted by the WHO people, but I think it is a reasonable presumption. From this it does not follow that WHO cannot go ahead and catch up soon after. There can be no certainty.

13. The financial aspect is important. From WHO and UNICEF we receive financial assistance of the value of 1.2 million dollars and there will be no royalty to pay later. With Mercks, on the other hand, we have to pay a considerable royalty and a lump sum of 600,000 dollars as advance payment. This advance payment being set off later against royalties. The period of contract is fifteen years. During this period a large sum in the shape of royalty will probably have to be paid to Mercks.

2. M.D.D. Gilder was the Minister of Public Health, Medicine and Public Works Department, Government of Bombay.

14. All these are important considerations. But the basic fact is as to whether WHO can deliver the goods, if I may put it so. In regard to that, one has to proceed on certain assumptions and advice and on the fact that WHO and UNICEF are great and expanding international organisations with considerable resources and that their prestige will be at stake.

15. There is also a certain social aspect of this matter—whether it is preferable to be associated with an international organisation or with a great and top-ranking commercial firm.

16. I referred this matter to Sir Edward Mellanby, who, though not a technical expert, is a man of great reputation in the medical world in the United Kingdom. He had no bias in the matter. He told me that he would consult Florey,³ the discoverer of penicillin and then write to me. His letter has been circulated. I think his opinion is valuable.

3. Howard Walter Florey (1898-1968); Professor of Pathology, Oxford University, 1935-62; Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine, 1945; author of *Antibiotics* (1949); *Lectures on General Pathology* (ed. 1954) and *General Pathology*, 1962.

BUILDING THE NATION
IV. Education and Culture

1. Approach to Education¹

The approach in education should not be too rigid and should allow free play for experiment and the development of the individual and of the society we aim at.

The general principle of basic education was accepted long ago by the Congress and a number of provincial Governments tried to apply it in various ways.

These provincial Governments were criticized for deviating from the original idea. I am unable to say how far these deviations have been justified. But on general principles, it seems to me that in any such experiment it is desirable to have a variety. There is always the danger of too much orthodoxy killing the spirit, and preventing the development of an inquisitive and experimental mind.

The education process takes some time to achieve results and if we confine ourselves to one experiment only, then we cannot take full advantage of a number of approaches. Then again, Governments have to deal with a variety of circumstances. They do not consist of a small body of persons devoted to a certain cause. They have to adapt themselves to these circumstances and they may not be judged from the point of view, let us say, of an "ashram".

Education necessarily implies an objective to be aimed at. That objective will be a personal and an individual one, as well as a social one. The social objective means some kind of a picture of society, which we wish to develop. In the present circumstances of India, or of the world, few persons can lay down precisely this social objective, although the broad lines of it might be indicated. For many months, our Planning Commission has been grappling with problems allied to social objectives. It has not been an easy matter and it will take the Commission some months more even to produce a limited plan. It is easy to lay down certain objectives in an academic way. It is much more difficult to translate them into practice, having regard to the various forces at work and the material available.

1. Message to the seventh session of the All-India Basic Education Conference, Sewagram, Wardha, 3 March 1951. From the *National Herald*, 4 March 1951.

2. A Universal Common Culture¹

Whatever may be the definition of culture, it should not be confined to an individual or group of individuals or even a particular nation. You should not suffer from a sense of superiority complex, which is dominating certain Western countries, but develop a sense of mutual understanding and acquire knowledge from others. The spirit of isolationism will not help in building a healthy cultural foundation of our national life.

I do not understand the real meaning of culture though the whole world has become mad about it. Culture is the very foundation of civilisation. It should be judged from various aspects of life. I feel that discipline, team work and democracy are three important factors of a cultured life. Culture is more dynamic in present-day society. Industrialisation should not be viewed independently of culture. The progress of a nation depends on its adaptability to the changing conditions. The people should not indulge in useless tall talk, but perform their respective duties small or big.

1. Address to the All India Cultural Conference, New Delhi, 15 March 1951. From the *National Herald*, 16 March 1951.

3. UNESCO and the Future of Humanity¹

Mr Chairman,² Mr Director-General,³ Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Almost exactly two years ago, in this very hall, I had the privilege to inaugurate the first session of this Indian National Commission of the UNESCO.⁴ Now, we meet here again, and I am called upon to undertake the same duty. I do so with great pleasure, and I consider it an honour and a privilege that you have

1. Speech at the meeting of the Indian National Commission of UNESCO, New Delhi, 24 March 1951. The session was for two days. AIR Tapes, NMML.
2. Abul Kalam Azad was the President.
3. Jaime Torres Bodet (1902-1974); Professor of French Literature, University of Mexico, 1924-28; Minister of Education, 1945-46, 1958-64, Foreign Affairs, 1946-48; Director-General, UNESCO, December 1948-November 1952; Mexican Ambassador in Paris, 1954-58; author of many books.
4. The first session of the Indian National Commission was held in the Council House, New Delhi, on 9 April 1949, and was inaugurated by Nehru. For inaugural speech at the first session see *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 10, p. 434.

associated me with others in this task. On behalf of the Government of India, I should like to welcome all these eminent men and women, of learning and goodwill, who have assembled here from various parts of the country. And I should like to welcome more especially, you Sir, Mr Director-General, who have graced this occasion with your presence. As our distinguished Chairman said just now, we had long looked forward to having you in our midst, to confer with you, to learn with you, what we should do, and, perhaps, to make some suggestions to you, as to what we had in our minds. You are welcome, because you are the head of a great organisation, which holds out promise for the future, and which has already substantial achievements in the present. You are also welcome, Sir, if I may say so, as a representative of a country, which though very far away from us, seems strangely akin to us in many ways, and when we look towards that country, we see friendly eyes and a spirit of understanding and comradeship there. You have played a distinguished role in that country of yours, and so as such also we welcome you, and may I say, that it has given me, as Foreign Minister of my country, great pleasure recently, to help in the exchange of ambassadors between your country and ours.⁵ I hope that will be a prelude to an even closer understanding and cooperation.

Now, Sir, in inaugurating this Conference, I do not quite know what you or others would expect me to say. I have been asked to come here and address you almost in my official capacity as Prime Minister, and I suppose, I cannot easily get rid of it. But I am something other than a Prime Minister also, and that is a human being. I hope, Prime Ministers are also normally human beings though not always, persons struggling all the time for some light, for some glimpse, for some vision of what one should do, of the truth and the pathway to the truth. It is becoming, I suppose, for a Prime Minister to confess to these struggles and to these conflicts, but a Prime Minister must be sure of mind and set of purpose and should know exactly what he should do and how he should do it. But forgetting for the moment that I happen to be Prime Minister of this great country, I want to address you for a few minutes as friends in a common quest, to share with you some of my own difficulties, because those difficulties are not merely mine, but they are difficulties in your minds also, and possibly in the minds of innumerable human beings all over the world.

UNESCO represents a great ideal. You read through its objectives, its charter. You read through the speeches that are made on various occasions. You see a list of what it has done and what it seeks to do. That is good, but a doubt arises in my mind and the doubt is this, how far, what we are doing in our different form of activities, how far that is meeting, what might be called the essential crisis of the day. That crisis may be represented in many

5. On 1 August 1950, the Governments of Mexico and India established diplomatic relations.

ways, but probably and essentially, it is a crisis of the spirit of many. We all suffer from it, if we are at all sensitive enough, if we at all think of what is happening around us. Here in India, many of us grew up under two great traditions. I might say, India grew up under those great traditions embodied in two mighty men, Gandhi and Tagore. These two men gave birth to India as it is today. We are children of theirs in thought, very imperfect, very foolish children, nevertheless children of theirs. Both of them very different from each other, and yet both of them completely grown out of the soil of India, out of the culture of India, out of the thousands of years of the background of India. And both so different, and both reminding us of the innumerable facets of India, because both were typically Indian, and both were different from each other, and yet so alike.

Those two represented the ideals which young India, in my youthful days had, which possibly many people still may have. And yet, I find that those two men somehow seem very distant now, though we take their names very often. Other ways of thinking, other ideals creep in, and instead of that mighty spirit of creative effort and faith and hope, which those two men represented in their different ways, the modern age, whether in India or elsewhere, begins to represent, more and more, a spirit of denial, a spirit of destruction, not of creation. If that is the spirit of the modern age, what will your activities be worth in your various sections, in your schools and seminars, and conferences and Congresses, if some dark cloud hovers around you and might envelop you at any time?

I remember, being in Geneva, in the year 1938 and the League of Nations was meeting there, and the other innumerable organs of the League of Nations were meeting in conferences and the rest of it. Just at that time, Europe was shaken by fears of war. War clouds had arisen in the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia and all kinds of threats and ultimatums were given and people rushed from London to this place, or from Paris to that place and there I was in Geneva and I found these commissions and committees calmly working as if they were oblivious of what was happening elsewhere. They could not stop that, of course. And soon, a year later, the committees and the commissions and the League of Nations itself were overwhelmed by events which they could not grasp or control. I wondered at that then that the great organisation, the League of Nations what was it after twenty years or more of effort—and it is no good decrying it, it did good work and its organs did very good work, indeed—nevertheless, it was swept away by something else, which it could not control. And so a fear creeps into my mind; are all our labours likely to be swept away by something entirely beyond our control? If so, is it not more desirable to control that something or try to control it rather than to try to live in an ivory tower, working, doing good work, no doubt, but work, which somehow does not affect the essence of things today?

That is one of the difficulties that confronts my thinking for we have come out suddenly into a new age. The symbol of this age is the atomic bomb, atomic energy, if you like. But it is well to realise that atomic energy today is thought of in terms of the atom bomb only, not other work, perhaps later it might do other work. And if that is the symbol of this age, then everything—men's thinking, men's fears, and everything else—is conditioned by that symbol. And we seem to live under this shadow.

Then again, I begin to think; are we, is our civilization, with its very proud and magnificent record; have we reached somewhere near the afternoon or evening of this civilization? Have we lost the creative spirit? Have we lost that energy and faith that comes with the dawn of a civilization? Can we recapture that spirit of the dawn and convert it into something other than it is today? Or is it inevitable that the afternoon will be followed by evening, and then by the shades of night? I do not know. But my mind struggles with these problems, and the smaller problems of the day, with which you and I and all of us have to deal with, from moment to moment and we cannot ignore. Nevertheless, these problems seem small to me in comparison with this major question mark of the age.

How are we to meet this? UNESCO says, education, science and culture. Of course, how else? And yet we find education, as our Chairman just told us,⁶ often running into wrong channels. We find science perverted to evil ends; we find culture, instead of something that broadens and gives us poise and vision and wisdom, sometimes we find this culture actually narrowing us, and actually creating wars. Of course, that is not culture; anything that separates and narrows, is not real culture. But anyhow, the word culture is used. The slogans of culture are used and each person who uses it, means something entirely different from some other person. And so, education, science and culture, which ought to help us in solving the world's problems, become barriers to that very solution.

How are we to get over this difficulty? Not surely by saying that education, science and culture are no good. Surely not because after all that is the only way, the only possibility and only means of our going ahead in understanding or solving these problems. So we have to adhere to them, and yet while adhering, we have to realise that these words often become base coins in our mouths and in our activities, more especially, in the fields of politics, every noble word and every noble sentiment that man has ever invented or thought of becomes base coin. How then are we to deal with this?

6. Azad suggested that radical changes be made in the methods of teaching history and geography. The greatest obstacle in the way of reform of teaching history and geography was the cult of narrow nationalism.

UNESCO, I understand, has here in India and possibly elsewhere been carrying on investigations into what is called, the problem of tensions. They study tensions, tensions between capital and labour, tensions between this community and that; between this religious group and that, and so many other tensions, because our world is full of tensions and, what is worse, each one of us, even as individuals, is full of tensions. Then I wonder if it would not be a worthy exercise in a study of tensions for UNESCO to study them at Lake Success. Why go far afield in studying them? Why not study them at the headquarters. Why not study them in the various Chancellories of the world? Because we are the root cause of the tensions of the world today. Not those people who occasionally might in a fit of excitement break heads; there are only a few heads broken, but those who sit in the Chancellories and prepare to break and smash millions and billions of heads. How then are you going to stop that? By studying the petty problems of the market-place or of some corner of the world here or there, when major problems overshadow the world?

So I am placing before you, in all humility, these problems that trouble me. And may I tell you, that when I think of these problems all pride of intellect goes, because I have seen intellect prostituted to base ends and sometimes intellect by itself leading to nothing. All pride of achievement fades away, because of the tremendous lack of achievement that stares one in the face. So pride goes and I do not quite know what remains in its place. Perhaps, some pride does remain, because so long as there is strength in one, one must have some pride to do one's duty and one's work. Well, whatever the achievement might be, the big question thus stands, how can we, wherever and howsoever we might be situated, how can we meet this great problem of this atomic age of ours? We find people, nations, statesmen, talk in terms of the greatest certitude, about their being right, about their undertaking some moral crusade or other, for the benefit of mankind. Sometimes, I feel that the world might be better off if there were few of these moral crusaders about. Everyone wants, not only to carry on the moral crusade in his own environment, but impose his moral crusade on others. Well, when modalities or the objectives of moral crusades differ, then inevitably comes conflict.

The fact of the matter is, that while in theory there is, as there ought to be, a great deal in common and what is considered culture or truth, nevertheless, the world is a very variegated place. The backgrounds of great nations are very different. Their historical development has been different. Even their wants today are different. In a great part of Asia today, the primary want is food, clothing, housing, some healthy conditions of living and the like. You cannot expect any higher flights of culture where the primary needs of mankind are lacking. Individuals may grow, of course, but I am talking about the general level. So a great part of Asia necessarily thinks of these primary needs. Other

countries think indifferently, because of their other needs or because of other things that had happened. Then great countries like India or others with a tremendous past, they cannot forget their past, and there is no reason why they should forget their past. They try to get rid, I hope, of the burden of that past insofar as it is wrong or out of place today. But their roots must necessarily come out of that past.

Therefore the first thing, one of the things to remember is, that in this world, while inevitably we are developing common ways of action and thinking, because that has become quite essential, inevitably also there are differences, and we must recognize those differences and give full play to those differences, and not try to impose our will against the others in order to obliterate those differences. Many countries seem to think that it is their duty to make others like themselves.

We live essentially in an age of science or engage in technological development. That goes ahead at an increasing tempo, and in doing so, has affected and will no doubt affect the lives of men, and may finally end up by the deaths of men. We can calculate and say with assurance that many of the problems of past history are capable of solution today, in terms of having the food and the clothing and the housing and the health services, and almost everything that a person requires. We can have them today. There is enough in the world for all and more. Therefore, the old reason for conflicts no longer exists and yet something is lacking. The fact of the matter is that this technological age has brought greater conflicts in its train, in spite of its promise of putting an end to conflicts. That again is a contradiction, just as, in spite of our continuous talk of peaceful progress and cooperation and mutual understanding between nations, the fact is, we go in a contrary direction. In spite of our knowing each other a little more, instead of that making us appreciate and understand the other, it often brings dislike of the other.

How then are we going to get over these contradictions? And I take it that this problem of UNESCO is essentially this, how to get over these difficulties in order to realise its ideals. How to utilise education and science and culture in the right way and prevent its exploitation for wrong ends. It should work in the many fields in which it functions now. Nevertheless, I do think that its efforts will not bring success, unless somehow or other it can affect that other and major field which seems to govern world affairs today. How can it do so? I do not know. But you cannot isolate it and separate it, or else we shall probably, in spite of all the goodwill and good intentions that we possess, drift inevitably to vast conflicts, which will bring tremendous disaster in their train. We live in this period of tremendous potential conflict, and more and more, every nation begins to think in terms just of survival, and when people think in terms of survival, it means that they are conditioned by great fear. And when fear and this desire just to survive comes up, then

logical thinking and the reasoning faculty do not easily function. Then human beings forget their humanity, because whether as individuals or nations, they are just fighting to escape some dreadful terror, fighting for survival, and they do not care what happens and what they do, in order possibly to survive. It is a dreadful prospect, this struggle for survival, which brings out the worst in humanity. And if humanity goes on these lines, thinking in terms of this fear, encompassing fear, and just of survival, then that fear itself will deaden it to all human instincts, and when the real struggle for survival comes, few may survive and possibly those who survive, will probably not be the best of humanity.

So you will forgive me if I have taken you somewhat outside your normal realm of activity and thought, but I have felt that unless this broader outlook and vision is before you, unless you think of these problems, in this way, perhaps, you will set yourself in rather narrow grooves, and thus lose perspective.

4. The Visva-Bharati Bill¹

In view of what my honourable friend just said² I should like to make clear, if there is any doubt about it, the attitude of Government in this matter. Also, I possess, without being worthy of it, another capacity and that is the Chancellorship of Visva-Bharati. We have looked upon this not only as a very great institution but as a very special and unique institution, and we are particularly anxious that it should not fall into the rut like other Universities. We are anxious, if I may say so, that our Education Department should not try to bring about any regimentation of it in line with others. The chief business of the Government of India or the Education Ministry will be to help it to develop on its own lines naturally, to see that any falling off in standards, according to its own standards, does not take place, or any deterioration so far as we can help it—but generally to allow it to develop according to its own

1. Statement in Parliament, 3 May 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol XI, Part II, columns 8012-8013.
2. S.P. Mookerjee suggested that the Visva-Bharati University should follow its original pattern and that the responsibility for framing the first statutes was rightly placed on Nehru, its first Chancellor, who should appoint a small committee, which should include representatives of Visva-Bharati. The fullest possible freedom should be given to those who were in charge of the University to carry on their activities without any interference of the Government.

genius or according as far as possible, to the vision that the great poet had. And I entirely agree with Dr Mookerjee when he laid stress on certain factors which may be called external if you like, but, nevertheless, which must have a very powerful influence in moulding the student there and creating a new environment,³ whether it is teaching in the mango grove or doing anything like that. I do attach great importance to it and I entirely agree with him that we should not spend our money on a large number of brick structures as we unfortunately still do in making our buildings, whether it is educational buildings or other buildings, and have little left to carry on the work in those buildings. I might mention that some time ago instructions were issued by the Government on this very subject, that we should try to forget brick and mortar as far as possible in buildings and have our schools, colleges and institutes in sheds, in thatched huts if necessary so as to utilise the money to greater advantage for the present.

One thing else. As I said, I feel a little embarrassed at having to occupy a position like that of the Chancellor of Visva-Bharati. Because whatever virtues I might possess, I am painfully conscious of a lack of virtue insofar as the qualities for a Chancellorship of such an institution are concerned, apart also from the fact that I am rather fully occupied otherwise, and can give very little time to it. But whether I gave much time to it or not, I have all along felt not only a very deep interest but a very special obligation to the memory of the poet and, if I may say so, it was due to a promise I made to him—or rather to my acceptance of his direction in this matter—that I feel that I ought to do my utmost for the growth of this magnificent idea to which he gave birth.

3. Mookerjee further suggested that while framing the statutes one ought to see that all those rigid conditions which were attached to the appointment of Professors and others and also to erection of buildings and other formalities should not be included in the working of Visva-Bharati. Everyone, who worked there, must be given those conditions of service which would enable him to live properly. Visva-Bharati should be allowed to flourish in its natural surroundings.

5. To P.S. Kumaraswami Raja¹

New Delhi
June 23, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

I have had a report about the new communal G.O. which your Government has published.² I have not actually seen it and I shall be grateful if you will send it to me. But from the account I have had of it, I have an impression that it has gone beyond the assurances that we gave in Parliament and is likely to reduce the efficiency and standards of our engineering and medical colleges considerably. We are all anxious to encourage and help backward groups, but it is dangerous to do so at the expense of merit and efficiency.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

2. A G.O. was issued on 19 June 1951 announcing fresh regulations for the admission of students to medical, engineering, agricultural and veterinary colleges. It stated: "Fifteen per cent of the total number of seats available will be reserved for those belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and twenty five per cent of the total number of seats available will be reserved for socially and educationally backward classes of citizens."

BUILDING THE NATION

V. Health

1. Ayurveda Medicine¹

...Jawaharlal Nehru: We should pursue every enquiry, every study,—whether it is in this Ayurvedic or Unani system—subject always to one overriding consideration, that it will be done in the spirit and by the methods of science, and that it cannot mix up a scientific method with a non-scientific method. The two cannot be mixed up in one place. But subject to scientific methods being followed we want to enquire into all our well-known old systems and new systems, to coordinate them as far as possible and to utilise them. In this Drug Institute at Lucknow that method is being followed...Government's view is that everything should be considered in a spirit of scientific enquiry. Anything that does not stand that test cannot survive ultimately. We cannot prevent private experiments to go on. But Government experiments will be conducted only by scientific method and we are prepared to examine everything that is Ayurvedic, Homoeopathy, Unani or anything else in that spirit and to take the best out of it for the public good.

Malaviya:² Who will examine it—those who do not know Ayurveda?

JN: If a thing is to be examined in the spirit of science only a scientist can examine it and no other.

If I may explain it still further, there is such a thing as the scientific method—it has nothing to do with ancient or modern—developed during the last two or three hundred years. It is a system of experiment of trial and error. Today a thing may be considered correct. By the scientific method some other fact comes to our knowledge tomorrow. So, there is no permanence....³ The honourable Member will be good enough to permit me to continue. Any person who is not trained in the scientific method of trial and error and who is not prepared to reject anything and everything which fails in an experiment is not a scientist. To take anything for granted because somebody has said so is not a scientific approach. One takes it with respect and examines it; if successful one goes ahead with it, otherwise, he does not go ahead with it.

1. Reply to the debate in Parliament, 19 March 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol IX, Part II, columns 4757-4758. Extracts.
2. Govind Malaviya.
3. Interruptions.

BUILDING THE NATION

VI. Housing

1. Government Housing Factory¹

May I say something in regard to this matter?² As this House knows sometime back a technical committee was appointed to take charge of the Housing Factory and to report to Government as to what was the best use to which the factory can be put. The National Physical Laboratory is the place where the tests are being carried out in regard to any matter concerning the housing factory and naturally therefore the persons in charge of the National Physical Laboratory played an important part in that Committee. Mr Moolgaokar³ is an important member of that Committee and so are the others. I may inform the House that as a result of this Committee's working we have made good progress. I repeat what I have said before that this factory is a magnificent acquisition of Government. That is the Committee's opinion and it is going to be not only of use in regard to construction work but is also going to be a very profitable undertaking. There appears to be some impression that this factory has caused considerable loss to Government. That is not true, if I may say so. Numerous mistakes have been made in the course of the operation of this factory and they have been and are being properly corrected. The impression that there has been any considerable loss is completely wrong. We are correcting the past mistakes and with the help of our scientists and others I have no doubt that the work produced by this factory will be considerable and profitable....

1. Reply to discussion in Parliament, 26 May 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol VIII, Part I, column 4678. Extracts.
2. Kamath asked whether the Moolgaokar Committee had held that the British consulting firm—Structural and Mechanical Development Engineers Ltd, Bucks, England—had been guilty of a breach of agreement.
3. Sumant Moolgaokar (1906-1989); engineer; Vice-Chairman, Tata Industries Private Limited, Bombay; Member, National Planning Council of Planning Commission and honorary adviser to Ministry of Economic and Defence Co-ordination.

BUILDING THE NATION
VII. Regrouping of Railways

1. Regrouping of Railways¹

I remember what the state of our railways was three or four years ago. There was a continuous complaint in Parliament and from the public. At all our principal ports mountains of packages lay piled up for lack of transport. Businessmen and merchants complained bitterly. A visit to a railway station was a painful affair because of the terrible overcrowding and unpunctuality of the trains. Whenever the Railway Budget came up for discussion in Parliament, there was a chorus of disapproval and complaint.

Conditions have changed greatly now and it is rather extraordinary how this change and progress has been brought about in the course of the last two years or so. Whatever achievements or lack of achievement our Government may have to its credit or discredit, I think I can say with full assurance that the improvement in the railway system in India is one of the outstanding achievements of the Government. I can say that without offending my sense of modesty because I have personally had nothing to do with it and I cannot therefore even share the credit. The credit goes to my colleagues, the Minister for Railways² and the Minister of State for Transport³ as well as to the Railway Board and the army of railwaymen who work the railways.

It is now proposed to bring about a regrouping of Indian Railways in six zones. The object is to increase the efficiency of the system by a certain centralisation and pooling and a better utilisation of our power and equipment. There is also greater rationalisation and it is hoped that considerable economies will thus result.

I think we can look forward with some assurance that these hopes will be fulfilled. We have the experience of the past two years of progress and so our hopes for the future are justified.

I send my good wishes on this occasion of the inauguration of the Southern Railway⁴ and my congratulations to all those from the top to the lower ranks of the Railway Services who serve the public in this greatest State undertaking.

1. Message, New Delhi, 31 March 1951. JN Collection.

2. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar.

3. K. Santhanam.

4. The Southern Railway, the first integrated railway system under the Government of India's six-zone regrouping plan, was inaugurated by Gopalaswami Ayyangar, the Minister for Railways and Transport, on 14 April 1951. It was formed by the amalgamation of the Madras, Southern Mahratta, the South Indian and the Mysore State Railways and covered routes extending to nearly 6,000 miles.

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS**I. The First Constitution Amendment Bill**

1. Judiciary and Land Reforms¹

... Question: Do the Government propose to amend the Constitution in view of the decisions of the Courts in regard to land reforms?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Yes, Naturally, Government must respect the decision of the High Court or the Supreme Court. If the Constitution is interpreted by the Courts in a way which comes in the way of the wishes of the legislature in regard to basic social matters, then it is for the legislatures to consider how to amend the Constitution, so that the will of the people as represented in legislature should prevail....

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 13 March 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 67-69, 103, 295, 355-356, 361-366, 443-445, 482-484, 502-505.

2. To P.S. Kumaraswami Raja¹

New Delhi
April 11, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

Your letter of the 9th April about reservations in services etc.² Quite apart from the merits of this question, it seems to me that any attempt to amend the Constitution on the lines suggested by you would give rise to tremendous difficulties and complications. Indeed I am quite sure that Parliament would never agree to it. Conditions of course differ in different provinces. Any such general amendment might well have disastrous results in some provinces. I would suggest that the best course would be for your Government to consult your law officers and frame a G.O. strictly within the terms of Article 16(4),³ keeping in mind that any special concessions can be made only for really

1. JN Collection.
2. In his letter Kumaraswami Raja requested the Government of India to amend the Constitution to retain the communal G.O., as it was necessary "in the interests of South India" to maintain the *status quo* with respect to the procedure in recruitment to services and admission to colleges.
3. Article 16(4) read: "Nothing in this Article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State."

backward classes of citizens and solely on that ground and not on the ground of equal distribution for all communities or on a basis of rationing for the several communities. In regard to admission in colleges, you have power to issue suitable instructions for the benefit of really backward classes under the well accepted judicial interpretations in respect of the principle of equality enunciated in Article 15.⁴ The point is that protection should be only for backward classes and not on any other ground. This has been explained also in the recent Supreme Court judgement.⁵ If your law officers give thought to this matter, it should be possible to issue instructions which would really meet all cases of backward classes and thus, to a large extent, answer your question.

I suggest to you, therefore, to have a new G.O. to provide for backward classes. This should be drafted so as not to conflict with the principles of the Constitution and making the best use of Article 16(4).

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. See *post*, p. 160.

5. On 8 April 1951, the Supreme Court unanimously held that the Madras Government's "communal G.O.", under which 14 seats to the medical and engineering colleges were filled on the basis of classification of communities, was inconsistent with Article 29(2) of the Fundamental Rights Chapter of the Constitution, which laid down that no citizen would be denied admission into educational institutions on grounds of religion, race, caste, language etc, and was therefore void.

3. The Constitution (First Amendment) Bill¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: This Bill is not a very complicated one; nor is it a big one. Nevertheless, I need hardly point out that it is of intrinsic and great importance. Anything dealing with the Constitution and change of it is of importance. Anything dealing with Fundamental Rights incorporated in the Constitution is of even greater importance. Therefore, in bringing this Bill forward, I do so and the Government does so in no spirit of light-heartedness, in no haste, but after the most careful thought and scrutiny given to this problem.

1. Speech on the occasion of moving in Parliament reference of the Constitution (First Amendment) Bill to a Select Committee, 16 May 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol XII & XIII, Part II, columns 8814-8833.

I might inform the House that we have been thinking about this matter for several months, consulting people, State Governments, Ministers of provincial Governments, consulting, when occasion offered itself, a number of Members of this House, referring it to various Committees and the like and taking such advice from competent legal quarters as we could obtain, so that we have proceeded with as great care as we could possibly give to it. We have brought it forward now after that care, in the best form that we could give it, because we thought that the amendments mentioned in this Bill are not only necessary, but desirable, and because we thought that if these changes are not made, perhaps not only would great difficulties arise, as they have arisen in the past few months, but perhaps some of the main purposes of the very Constitution may be defeated or delayed. In a sense this matter, of course, has been mentioned rather vaguely and has been before the public for some time. But in the precise form that it has been raised in this Bill, it came up only when I introduced this Bill in the House a few days ago.²

There have been quite a number of criticisms of various kinds.³ There have been criticisms not only in our own country, as they should be, but also in some foreign countries, where some of our friends or those who were our friends have got into the habit of criticising whatever we might do. If we seek peace it is criticized. If we do something else, they say that we are not peaceful. And so, as I said, there has been a good deal of criticism and we welcome this criticism, because in a matter of this kind, the greater the scrutiny the better. And may I say that it is with no desire to hurry this that I have mentioned an early date for the report of the Select Committee.⁴ I do not myself see how a prolongation of this date for a relatively simple Bill, however important, would enable us to give greater thought to it. Such thought and experience that we have with regard to the three or four Articles, surely, can be brought to bear on the question within a few days; and even if we make the few days into a few weeks, it is not going to increase the amount of concentrated attention or thought that we might give it.

Now, various types of criticisms have been raised. One of them is a rather curious one namely that this House having been elected on a narrow

2. The Constitution (First Amendment) Bill, providing *inter alia* for the amendment of the Article in the Indian Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech and expression (Article 19), was introduced in the Union Parliament on 12 May 1951 by Nehru.
3. For example, speaking against the motion, S.P. Mookerjee suggested that the Bill should be circulated in order to elicit public opinion, pointing out that Nehru himself had said that there was no particular hurry in the matter.
4. Nehru presented the Select Committee's report to Parliament on 25 May 1951. A motion to take into consideration the Bill as reported upon by the Committee was introduced by 29 May 1951, and passed on 31 May 1951 by 246 votes to 14. The clause relating to the Press was passed on 1 June by 228 votes to 19, and the Bill as a whole was adopted on 2 June by 228 votes to 20.

franchise, not being really representative of the country and of the organised will of the community, is not justified or it is not proper for it to deal with such amendments. I seem to remember those very people who raise this criticism criticising the right, not of this particular House, but nevertheless, very much the same House which preceded it, criticising the Constituent Assembly for daring to draft the Constitution for India, because they were elected on a certain franchise. Now, that Constituent Assembly which has gone into the history of India is no more; but we who sit here, or nearly all of us, still continue that tradition, that link. In fact, it is we after all, who were the Constituent Assembly and who drafted this Constitution. Then we were not supposed to be competent enough to draft the Constitution. But now, the work we did was so perfect that we are not now competent enough to touch it. That is rather an odd argument. We have come up here, naturally because after the experience of a year and a half or so, we have learned much. We have found out some, if I may say so, errors in drafting or in possible interpretations to be put on what we had drafted. That is but natural. And the House will also remember that when this matter of the Constitution was being considered in the Constituent Assembly, a clause or an Article was proposed, that within a space of five years any changes in the Constitution should be relatively easy, that the normal procedure laid down need not be followed, but an easy procedure should be followed. Why? Because it was thought that, if I may say so, rightly thought that after a little while many little things may come to our notice which did not come up in the course of the debate, and we could rectify them after that experience, with relative ease, so that after this preliminary experience, the final shape may be more final and there would be no necessity for extensive amendments. However, that particular clause unfortunately, if I may say so with due respect, was dropped out. Nevertheless, so far as this House is concerned, it can proceed in the manner provided by the Constitution to amend it, if this House so chooses.

Now, there is no doubt that this House has that authority. There is no doubt about that, and here, I am talking not of the legal or constitutional authority but of moral authority, because it is, roughly speaking, this House that made the Constitution. We are not merely technically the inheritors of the fathers of the Constitution. We really shaped it and hammered it after years of close debate. Now we come to this House for amendments because we have noticed some lacunae. We have noticed that difficulties arise because of various interpretations. It has been pointed out to us by judicial interpretations that some of these lacunae exist. Now, let me say right at the outset that so far as the interpretation of the Constitution is concerned, it is the right and privilege of the highest courts of the land to do it, and it is not for us as individuals or even as a Government to challenge that right. The judiciary must necessarily stand above, shall I say, political conflicts and the like or

political interpretations. They have to interpret it in the light of the law and with such light as they can give to it. We respect that and we must obey that. But having followed that interpretation, it becomes our business as Parliament to see whether the purpose we aimed at is fulfilled, because if it is not fulfilled, then the will of the community does not take effect. And if the will of the community ultimately does not take effect, then serious difficulties might arise at any time. And more so at a time like this when powerful and dynamic forces are at work, not merely in India, not merely in Asia, but all over the world, when changes take place and when we cannot think in terms of anything being static and unchanging. Therefore, while fully respecting what the courts of the land have laid down and obeying their decisions, nevertheless it becomes our duty to see whether the Constitution so interpreted was rightly framed and whether it is desirable to change it here and there so as to give effect to what really in our opinion, was intended or should be intended. Therefore I come up before this House, not with a view to challenge any judicial interpretation, but rather to find out and to take the assistance of this House in clearing up doubts and in removing certain approaches to this question which have prevented us sometimes of social reform and the like.

This House knows very well that there are many kinds of Constitutions in the world. There is the Constitution which is not written down, for instance, the Constitution of the United Kingdom where Parliament is absolutely supreme and can do and say what it likes and that is the law of the land, and no court can challenge it, however they may interpret the law. Then there is the written Constitution like the Constitution of that great country—the United States of America—where the Constitution, to some extent, limits the authority of the legislature insofar as certain Fundamental Rights or other provisions are given in it. Now, in the United States of America, by a long course of judicial decisions, healthy conventions have been laid down and the power of the legislature has been widened somewhat. Because of the interpretations by high judicial authority and because of those conventions, the extreme rigidity that perhaps the written word might have given it has been made more flexible in the course of generations. I have no doubt that if we live through a static period, gradually those conventions would arise here too, relaxing that rigidity. But unfortunately we have no time. It is barely a little more than a year since we started functioning under this Constitution. And to begin with, therefore, it is only the written word in all its rigid aspects that apparently counts and not the many inner meanings that we sought to give to it. So we are deprived of that slow process of judicial interpretation and development of conventions which the other countries with the written Constitutions have gone through like the United States of America. Therefore because we live in these rapidly changing times, we cannot wait for that slow process. We have to give a slightly different shape to the written word. In effect we do what in the normal

course judicial interpretation might have done and probably would have done and we come up before this House for that purpose.

A great deal has been said about the desire of this Government to put any kind of curb or restraint on the freedom of the citizen or Press or of groups.⁵ First of all, may I remind the House that this Bill only perhaps clears up what the authority of Parliament is. We are not putting down any kind of curb or restraint. We are removing certain doubts so as to enable Parliament to function if it so chooses and when it chooses. Nothing else happens when this Bill is passed except to clarify the authority of Parliament. May I also point out to this House that we in this Government and we in this House, have not got a very long life. This session is coming to a close and after this session there is likely to be a brief session again before the general elections take place in this country. This present Parliament will give place to another—a larger one, perhaps a different one. The Government may give place to another, and whatever changes we may make in the Constitution today, it is highly unlikely that this Government or this Parliament will take advantage of them by passing laws to that effect, unless some very severe crisis, national or international, arises. In effect, therefore, it is not this Government that is trying to seek power or consolidate itself and certainly I do repudiate the suggestion which has been made here and there that any of these amendments are meant to be utilized for political or party purposes. Because nothing could be further from our thought and indeed, from the practical point of view, the House will observe that that can hardly be done. We do wish, when we walk away from this present scene before the election or after, to leave something for the succeeding Parliament and for the younger generation that will come up—something that they can wield and handle with ease for the advancement of India and not something which will come always in their way and deflect them from the set purpose we have in view. Therefore, it is from this point of view that we have put forward this Bill.

The House is seized of this Bill and no doubt honourable Members have noticed the various proposals made therein. A number of amendments might be called rather secondary in importance—not concerning any vital matters of principle. I shall point them out to the House a little later. They are not of great importance but they have come up before us because of certain difficulties which we have experienced. For instance, if I may mention one particular

5. S.P. Mookerjee said in Parliament on 16 May 1951 that the existing law regarding the Press was sufficient and the amendment was a challenge "which had been deliberately thrown at the people of India." If the Government wished to prevent groups of persons committing acts which they considered against public order, the Government had sufficient authority to do so. Thakur Das Bhargava also did not agree with Nehru that the Press in India had more liberties than in any other part of the world.

difficulty, one of the Articles—for the moment—I forget the number—lays down that this House should meet twice a year and the President should address it. Now a possible interpretation of that is that this House has not met at all this year. It is an extraordinary position considering that this time this House has laboured more than probably at any time in the previous history of this or the preceding Parliament in this country. We have been practically sitting with an interval round about Christmas since November and we are likely to carry on and yet it may be held by some acute interpreters that we have not met at all this year strictly in terms of the Constitution because we started meeting in November and we have not met again—it has not been prorogued—the President has not addressed Parliament this year. Put it in the extreme way, suppose this House met for the full year without break except short breaks, it worked for 12 months, then it may be said under the strict letter of the law that it has not met at all this year. Of course that Article was meant not to come in the way of our work but to come in the way of our leisure. It was indeed meant and it must meet at least twice a year and there should not be more than six months' interval between the meetings. It did not want any Government of the day simply to sit tight without the House meeting. Therefore it wanted to compel it by the force of the Constitution and meet at least twice a year but without a big gap. That again by interpretation leaves a curious situation that if you continue meeting, you do not meet at all.

H.V. Kamath: Calendar year or financial year?

JN: Totally immaterial. It does not much matter which you consider.⁶ The point is presumably we deal with the calendar year in such matters. So, you will see three or four amendments really deal with this. That is to say, two of them deal with Parliament and two deal with the State Assemblies because the same rule affects them also. There are one or two other matters which are rather minor. I might as well refer to them before I go to the more important one.

Article 85⁷ is the Article to which I have referred about the sessions of Parliament, prorogation and dissolution. Article 87⁸ is the consequential one

6. Kamath intervened saying that it did matter sometimes.

7. Article 85 read: "(1) The Houses of Parliament shall be summoned to meet twice at least in every year, and six months shall not intervene between their last sitting in one session and the date appointed for their first sitting in the next session...."

8. Article 87 read: "(1) At the commencement of every session the President shall address both Houses of Parliament assembled together and inform Parliament of the causes of its summons...."

to change. So also Articles 174⁹ and 176¹⁰ apply to State Assemblies in the same way in regard to a Governor summoning them twice a year. Then Articles 341¹¹ and 342¹² relate to notification of Scheduled Tribes and Castes by the President. Here it is really a verbal change to make it clear because some States have not got Rajpramukhs, etc. Article 372¹³ relates to the adaptation of laws where it is sought to increase the period from two to three years. Article 376¹⁴—the last one—enables Government to appoint a Chief Justice even though he might not be a citizen of India.

These are relatively minor points. The real important provisions which I am putting before the House relate to Articles 19¹⁵ and 31.¹⁶ There is also Article 15¹⁷ with which I will deal first. In Article 15 it is sought to add certain words. Perhaps it might appear that these words might almost be considered redundant. Nevertheless it has been considered desirable to add them and I am not quite sure if a slight further addition would not even be better to make it quite clear.

9. Article 174 read: "(1) The House or Houses of the legislature of the State shall be summoned to meet twice at least in every year, and six months shall not intervene between their last sitting in one session and the date appointed for their first sitting in the next session...."
10. Article 176 read: "(1) At the commencement of every session, the Governor shall address the Legislative Assembly or, in the case of a State having a Legislative Council, both Houses assembled together and inform the Legislature of the causes of its summons...."
11. Article 341 read: "(1) The President may, after consultation with the Governor or Rajpramukh of a State, by public notification, specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State...."
12. Article 342 read: "(1) The President may, after consultation with the Governor or Rajpramukh of a State, by public notification, specify the Tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that State...."
13. According to Article 372, nothing in clause (2) could be deemed to empower the President to make any adaptation or modification of any law after the expiry of two years from the commencement of the Constitution.
14. Article 376 enabled the Government to appoint a Chief Justice even though he might not be a citizen of India.
15. Article 19 gave all citizens the right to freedom of speech and expression, assemble peaceably and without arms, form associations or unions, move freely throughout the territory of India, acquire, hold and dispose of property and practise any profession or carry on any occupation, trade or business.
16. According to Article 31, no person could be deprived of his property "save by authority of law."
17. Article 15, which dealt with the right to equality, laid down that the State would not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

The real difficulty which has come up before us is this. The Constitution lays down certain Directive Principles of State Policy and after long discussion we agreed to them and they point out the way we have got to travel. The Constitution also lays down certain Fundamental Rights. Both are important. The Directive Principles of State Policy represent a dynamic move towards a certain objective. The Fundamental Rights represent something static, to preserve certain rights which exist. Both again are right. But somehow and sometimes it might so happen that that dynamic movement and that static standstill do not quite fit into each other.

A dynamic movement towards a certain objective necessarily means certain changes taking place: that is the essence of movement. Now it may be that in the process of dynamic movement certain existing relationships are altered, varied or affected. In fact they are meant to affect those settled relationships and yet if you come back to the Fundamental Rights they are meant to preserve, not indirectly, certain settled relationships. There is a certain conflict in the two approaches, not inherently, because that was not meant, I am quite sure. But there is that slight difficulty and naturally when the courts of the land have to consider these matters they have to lay stress more on the Fundamental Rights than on the Directive Principles of State Policy. The result is that the whole purpose behind the Constitution, which was meant to be a dynamic Constitution leading to a certain goal step by step, is somewhat hampered and hindered by the static element being emphasised a little more than the dynamic element and we have to find out some way of solving it.

The amendment which I seek to move is, to be quite frank with the House, not a solution of the basic problem which will come up before the House in various shapes and forms from time to time. But it does lay stress on one small aspect of it.

May I also point out and try to remove a possible misconception that might be in the minds of some honourable Members? They might think that this is perhaps a devious method to bring in some kind of a communal element in the consideration of this problem. I want to make it perfectly clear that so far as Government are concerned they do not wish to have any truck with communalism in any form. But you have to distinguish between backward classes which are specially mentioned in the Constitution that have to be helped, to be made to grow and not think of them in terms of this community or that. Only if you think of them in terms of the community you bring in communalism. But if you deal with backward classes as such, whatever religion or anything else they may happen to belong to, then it becomes our duty to help them towards educational, social and economic advance. Naturally that advance is not meant to be, if I may say so, at the expense of the others. We want to pull people up and not pull them down. But sometimes in this intervening period difficulties arose, because we have not made enough

provision, let us say, for giving a certain type of education, technical or other. The question arose whether we should give some reasonable encouragement and opportunity for that education to be given to members of the backward classes, which otherwise, without that encouragement and opportunity, they may not get at all, so that they remain where they are and we cannot pull them up. Therefore the object of this amendment is to lay stress on this.

The House may remember Article 29(2) which says that no one by reason of his religion, etc, etc, should be kept out of an educational institution. That is a fundamental thing by which this Constitution stands and we must stand by it. There is no question of going behind that. What I submit is, respecting that we have also to respect that fundamental directive of this Constitution and the fundamental aims of our policy, that we must encourage and help those who are backward to come up and give them proper training and proper opportunities of social and economic advance.

The essential difficulty is this. The whole conception of the Fundamental Rights is the protection of individual liberty and freedom. That is a basic conception and to know where from it was derived you have to go back to European history from the latter days of the 18th century; roughly speaking, you may say from the days of the French Revolution which spread on to the 19th century. That might be said to be the dominating idea of the 19th century and it has continued and it is a matter of fundamental importance. Nevertheless, as the 19th century marched into the 20th century and as the 20th century went ahead, other additional ideas came into the field which are represented by our Directive Principles of State Policy. If in the protection of individual liberty you protect also individual or group inequality, then you come into conflict with that Directive Principle which wants, according to your own Constitution, a gradual advance, or let us put it another way, not so gradual but more rapid advance, wherever possible to a state where there is less and less inequality and more and more equality. If any kind of an appeal to individual liberty and freedom is construed to mean an appeal to the continuation of the existing inequality, then you get into difficulties. Then you become static, unprogressive and cannot change and you cannot realise that ideal of an egalitarian society which I hope most of us aim at.

These problems arise and I have mentioned them to the House, not because they arise out of the little amendment that I propose but at the back of these problems they are there and we have to come to grips with them. If this particular amendment can be somewhat varied I should welcome it. I do not stick to that particular wording. In the Select Committee or elsewhere some few words may perhaps make the meaning clearer which I have sought to put before the House, and I would personally welcome it.

Then we come to the two main Articles which have to be dealt with in this Bill. Article 19 deals with the Fundamental Rights regarding freedom of

speech etc. It has been said that this Government seeks to curb and restrict the freedom of the Press.¹⁸ Honourable Members are fully aware of the state of affairs today. I do not think there is any country in the world at the present moment where there is so much freedom—if I may use that word for the moment—in regard to Press publications as in India. I have frequently given expression to my appreciation of the way responsible journals in this country are conducted. I should like to say so again. But I have also drawn attention to the way the less responsible news-sheets are conducted, and it has become a matter of the deepest distress to me to see from day to day some of these news-sheets which are full of vulgarity and indecency and falsehood, not injuring me or this House much, but poisoning the mind of the younger generation, degrading their mental integrity and moral standards. It is not for me a political problem but a moral problem. How are we to save our younger generation from this progressive degradation and poisoning of the mind and spirit? From the way untruth is bandied about and falsehood thrown about it has become quite impossible to distinguish what is true and what is false. Imagine our younger generation in the schools and colleges reading this, imagine, I ask this House, our soldiers and our sailors and our airmen reading this from day to day. What kind of impression do they carry?

Yes, we can satisfy ourselves that we have got the complete freedom of the Press. That is true. But freedom like everything else, and more than everything else, carries certain responsibilities and obligations and certain disciplines, and if these responsibilities and obligations and disciplines are lacking then it is no freedom, it is the absence of freedom, whether an individual indulges in it or a group or a newspaper indulges or anyone else.

For my part, as I grow in years I become more and more convinced that one cannot deal with any major problem, whether it is international or national, by simply relying on coercive processes. More and more I have come to realise that. I know of course that essentially, or at any rate a part of the duty of a Government is a duty to coerce the evil-doer according to the laws of the land. That is true. And till we rise to higher levels a Government will always have that duty. I know that it is the duty of a Government to protect the freedom of the country from external invasion, by keeping armies and navies and the like. And so, in spite of my deep and almost instinctive belief that this kind of violence does not solve the problems, yet, having responsibility, I have to rely on those coercive processes, on the army and the navy etc, and keep them in the most effective and efficient way that we can. Therefore, it is

18. Clause 2 of Article 19 laid down that the provision regarding Fundamental Rights could not be applicable to any existing law, or prevent the State from making any law relating to libel, slander, defamation, contempt of court or any matter undermining the security of the State.

not with any idea of trying to improve, if I may say so, the morals of the country by coercive processes that I approach this question. I do not believe that morality is improved by coercive processes whether in the individual or in the group. Nevertheless, when there is a total lack or a great lack of those restraints which make up civilisation, which go behind any culture, whether it is of the East or the West, when there is no sense of responsibilities and obligations, what are we to do? How are we to stop that corroding influence, that disintegrating process that goes on?

Now, I am in a difficulty. This particular amendment is not, let me remind the House, a law curbing or restraining anybody. All these amendments are enabling measures merely clarifying the power of Parliament which might be challenged or has been challenged in regard to some matters. Things remain, so far as the law is concerned, exactly as they were, so long as this Parliament or a future Parliament does not take some action after due thought. I have never heard of anyone saying that in the United Kingdom there is no freedom of the Press or freedom of anything because Parliament is all powerful. I have never heard that said. It is only here we seem not to rely on ourselves, not to have faith in ourselves, in our Parliament or our Assemblies, and rely, just as some of us may have relied on external authority—like the British power of old days; we rely on some external authority may be geographically internal—and not perhaps have faith in this Parliament. After all, the responsibility for the governance of India, for the advancement of India lies on this and future Parliaments, and if this Parliament or future Parliaments of India do not come up to expectations, fail in their great enterprise, then it would not be good for India, and nobody else would preserve India from going towards misfortune. So that you rely on this Parliament for the biggest things, and yet you come and tell us, "Do not trust this Parliament because it may do something against the Constitution." So, I would beg the House to remember that this Bill does not bring in any offence, any curb, any restraint. It is an enabling measure clarifying the power of Parliament to deal with the matter. To what extent, is another matter and I shall go into it.

As I have said, I have a difficulty in dealing with, let us say, the Press. The Press is one of the vital organs of modern life, more especially in a democracy. The Press has tremendous powers and tremendous responsibilities. The Press has to be respected, the Press has to be cooperated with. In a somewhat varied career I have sometimes considered myself also a bit of a journalist and a pressman. So I approach this question not as an outsider but to some extent as an insider also, with full sympathy for the difficulties that journalists and newspapermen and editors have to face. But then, what is the Press; those great organs of national opinion, or some two-page news-sheet that comes out overnight from time to time without regularity, full of abuse, sometimes used even for blackmailing persons? What is the Press? Is that

news-sheet the Press or the great national organs or the hundreds and thousands of periodicals and newspapers in-between? What standard have I to devise? Everything is the Press. Nobody thinks of restraining the freedom of the responsible organs unless some very extraordinary thing occurs. But what are we to do with these little sheets that come out from day to day and poison and vitiate the atmosphere? As I said, it is a difficult thing and a dangerous thing. And power and responsibility do not go together. A Prime Minister of the United Kingdom once, referring to certain types of the Press, said that they had the harlot's privilege of power without responsibility.¹⁹ Well, there it is. One has to face the modern world with its good and bad, and it is better, on the whole, I think, that we give even licence than suppress the normal flow of opinion. That is the democratic method. But having laid that down, still I would beg to say that there is a limit to the licence that one can allow at any time, more so at times of great peril and danger to the State. At the present moment it is our good fortune that in spite of difficult problems in the country, we function normally; we function in this Parliament normally; we function in State Assemblies more or less normally; the machinery of Government goes on; the administration goes on and we try as best as we can to face the problems. Yet we live at a time of grave danger in the world, in Asia, in India. No man can say what the next few months may bring, the next few months, or if you like, the next year—I am not thinking of the elections, but rather of other happenings that are bigger than elections. Now at this moment when great countries—not to mention smaller ones—even great countries think almost of a struggle for survival, when they think that in spite of their greatness and power they are in danger, all of us have to think in terms of survival. And when a country is face to face with grave problems and questions, from the national point of view, of life and death and survival, then there is a certain priority and a certain preference in the way of doing things.

As the House knows, when there is a great war on and your country is involved in it, one has to deal with the situation somewhat differently than otherwise. Today, although there is no great war of that type, although we hope that no great war will come, and even if it comes we hope we shall be out of it, even so, war or no war, we live in a kind of pre-war state of deep crisis and we have to suffer the consequences of it. So, in this critical stage where always there is the question of survival, we cannot function loosely, inefficiently, without discipline, without responsibility, without thinking of our obligations. Therefore, it becomes necessary to give power to this Parliament, or to the future Parliament, which will represent the organised will of the

19. Stanley Baldwin in February 1931.

community in India to take in a time of crisis such steps as it chooses. To prevent us from doing so is to deceive yourself and not to have faith in yourself and to be unable to meet a crisis when it arises and thereby perhaps do great injury to the cause we represent.

Now, what are these wonderful amendments which are said to be curbs and restraints on the Press? In the main the amendment to Article 19, clause (2) that we suggest contains three new phrases. The three phrases are; friendly relations with foreign States, public order and incitement to an offence. All the rest practically, apart from minor changes in the words, are in the old clause (2). The new clause reads thus:

(2) Nothing in sub-clause (a) of clause (1) shall affect the operation of any existing law insofar as it imposes, or prevent the State from making any law imposing, in the interests of the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said sub-clause, and in particular, nothing in the said sub-clause shall affect the operation of any existing law insofar as it relates to, or prevent the State from making any law relating to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

The three novel words, or sets of words, compared to the old phraseology are: friendly relations with foreign States, public order and incitement to an offence. Let us now examine them. For the moment, as I said, it is only an enabling measure giving power to Parliament. But let us go beyond that. Does it involve any radical attack on the basic conception of the Fundamental Rights? Take the first thing—foreign relations. Now if anyone thinks that this is meant to stifle criticism of foreign countries, certainly it is not my intention and I am quite sure not of my Government. Ultimately, of course, if such a matter arises, it will be the subject of legislation that Parliament will frame. We are not framing legislation here. We can only indicate that such a thing can be legislated about. Nobody wants it. At the same time, this House will realise that at this particular moment of a very delicate international situation and tension, we cannot easily take the risk when something said and done, not an odd thing said and done, but something said and done repeatedly and continuously, may lead in regard to foreign countries to the gravest consequences, may lead to our relations with that foreign country deteriorating rapidly. It is a power which every Government possesses and deals with. It is certainly a power which can be used or misused—it is true. But that question has to be examined when that particular power is granted. All that is said here is that the authority to deal with this matter should vest with Parliament and should not be taken away. Surely, no Member in this House is prepared to say, I hope, that this House should not have the authority to deal with this

matter when grave international issues are involved, when something written or said continuously may endanger the peace of the world or our country. It is a very serious matter, that we cannot stop it. What steps to take and how to take them are matters for careful determination when the question arises. Unless this House has the authority to deal with it, the situation cannot be faced and we would be simply helpless to prevent a steady deterioration and disintegration of the situation.

Then the other things are public order and incitement to an offence. Again these are words which may mean more or less—it is perfectly true. If such words were used in an actual piece of legislation, they have to be examined strictly as to how far they go and what powers they confer on the executive. But when you use them here in the sense of enabling Parliament to take steps, then you should use some general phrase not limiting the power of Parliament to face a situation. But when it brings any legislation to that effect, then examine it thoroughly and carefully. It is clear that the original clause, as interpreted by superior courts in this country, has put this Government, or would put any Government, into a very difficult position. The House knows—and it is mentioned in the Statement of Object and Reasons—that one of the High Courts held that even murder or like offences can be done.²⁰ It may be and I am quite sure it would be in the long run, as in other countries that judicial interpretation would gradually bring things more in line with what I would beg to say is the spirit of the Constitution.

I have no doubt that in course of time with the help of the highest courts in the land we would develop conventions eventually which would widen the authority of the Legislature to deal with them as the United States of America has done.²¹ The unfortunate part is that we just cannot wait for a generation or two for these conventions etc to develop. We have to deal with the situation today and tomorrow, this year and the next year. Therefore the safest way is not to pass a legislation in a hurry but to enable Parliament to have authority to deal with such matters. Personally I confess my own belief is that it is better in any event and always for Parliament to have a large measure of authority, even the authority to make mistakes and go to pieces. Certainly I realise that in conditions as they exist in India today the exact form, let us say, of the Constitution of the United Kingdom is not applicable. We are too big a country, too varied a country. We have to have a kind of federation,

20. This remark of a Judge of the Punjab High Court was repudiated by the Supreme Court.

21. Under the American Constitution, all the guaranteed rights being legal and constitutional in their nature were justiciable and as such enforceable by courts. The rights, however, having been formulated in very general and comprehensive terms, the American Supreme Court had to necessarily read into these rights implied reservations and exceptions.

autonomous States and the like. Therefore it is inevitable that we should have a written Constitution. We have got it, and it is a fine Constitution. Gradually as we work it, difficulties appear. As wise men we deal with them and change it.

Here may I say, in connection with the use of the coercive apparatus of the State to deal with these problems, it has been our misfortune in the past two or three years to have had to use it in a variety of ways? We have had to use it because, practically speaking, we have had sometimes to face a challenge which can only be comparable to the challenge of war. The challenge may have come internally, but it was a challenge to the State as a war challenge is, that is by violence and by violent effort. We had to face it—as every State has to face it—by the organised strength of the State, whether it is the police or the military strength, whether it was in Telengana or wherever it may be. Yet I should like to remind the House in this connection of Telengana which I mentioned that we have recently seen—and the thing is happening today—another way of meeting this type of situation, a peaceful way, a non-violent way. We have been seeing the frail figure of Vinoba Bhave²² marching singly into Telengana and by his words and by his action producing a tremendous effect on the people there and possibly even in the immediate present producing much more effect than any armed force could have done and certainly, if that is so in the immediate present, taking a longer view, must certainly be doing more because the effect of the armed force is good for the time being but in the long run it may not be so good; it may leave a bad trail of memories.

Now I shall proceed with the other Article, the important one, namely Article 31. When I think of this Article the whole gamut of pictures comes up before my mind, because this Article deals with the abolition of the zamindari system, with land laws and agrarian reform. I am not a zamindar, nor am I a tenant. I am an outsider. But the whole length of my public life has been intimately connected, or was intimately connected, with agrarian agitation in my province. And so these matters came up before me repeatedly and I became intimately associated with them. Therefore I have a certain emotional reaction to them and awareness of them which is much more than merely an intellectual appreciation. If there is one thing to which we as a party have been committed in the past generation or so it is agrarian reform and the abolition of the zamindari system.

Hussain Imam:²³ With compensation.

22. Leader of the Bhoodan movement after 1947 who toured almost the entire country on foot to collect land through donation for distribution among the landless.

23. A leading member of the All India Muslim League from Bihar till 1947.

JN: With adequate and proper compensation, not too much.

Hussain Imam: "Adequate" is quite enough.

JN: Now, apart from our commitment, a survey of the world today, a survey of Asia today will lead any intelligent person to see that the basic and the primary problem is the land problem. And every day of delay adds to the difficulties and dangers, apart from being an injustice in itself. There are many ways of dealing with this problem. We have seen in many countries this problem being dealt with quickly and rapidly and without any check, either by expropriation absolute or by some middle way of part expropriation and part nominal compensation, whatever it may be. Anyhow they have dealt with it rapidly. And where they have a new stability, I am not going into the justice or injustice of it but am looking at it purely from the point of view of stability. Of course if you go into the justice or injustice, you have to take a longer view, not the justice of today but the justice of yesterday also. But we adopted another method, and I think we rightly adopted that method, of trying to deal with it not in such a hurry but as adequately—after full thought and consideration of all interests—as we could, and the giving of compensation. Now, I am not going into those questions, but it is patent that when you are out basically to produce a certain equality, when you are out to remedy inequalities, you do not remedy inequalities by producing further inequalities. We do not want anyone to suffer. But, inevitably, in big social changes some people have to suffer. We have to think in terms of large schemes of social engineering, not petty reforms but of big schemes like that. Now, if all our schemes like that are stopped—maybe rightly stopped, maybe due to a correct interpretation of the law and therein too the lawyers differ and even Judges have differed—again, I have no doubt that we have a generation to wait for things to stabilize. Then, we will have the help of the High Courts of the land, but we cannot wait. That is the difficulty. Even in the last three years or so some very important measures passed by State Assemblies and the rest have been held up. No doubt, as I said, the interpretation of the courts must be accepted as right but you, I and the country have to deal with social and economic conditions—social and economic upheavals—and we are responsible for them. How are we to meet them? How are we to meet this challenge of the times? How are we to answer the question: For the last ten or twenty years you have said, we will do it. Why have you not done it? It is not good enough for us to say: We are helpless before fate and the situation which we face at present. Therefore, we have to think in terms of these big changes, land changes and the like and therefore we thought of amending Article 31.

Ultimately we thought it best to propose additional Articles 31A²⁴ and 31B²⁵ and in addition to that there is a Schedule attached of a number of Acts passed by State Legislatures, some of which have been challenged or might be challenged and we thought it best to save them from long delays and these difficulties, so that this process of change which has been initiated by the States should go ahead. Many of us present here are lawyers and have had some training in law which is a good training and many of us respect lawyers. But nevertheless a lawyer represents precedent and tradition and not change, not a dynamic process. Above all, the lawyer represents litigation. Just as, if I may say so with all respect, that in the modern system of treating disease the doctor is rightly interested in disease. Somehow we have found that this magnificent Constitution that we have framed was later kidnapped and purloined by the lawyers.

Mohanlal Gautam:²⁶ It is a paradise for them.

JN: Yes. I do not grudge anyone entering paradise but what I do object to is the shutting of the door and of barring and bolting it and preventing others from coming in. The other day I was reading an article about India by a very eminent American and in that article which contained many correct statements and some incorrect statements, the author finished up by saying that India has very difficult problems to face but the most acute of them, he said, can be put in five words and those five words were: land, water, babies, cows and capital. I think that there is a great deal of truth in this concise analysis of the Indian situation. I am not for the moment going to say anything about babies or cows important as they are, nor do I wish to say anything about capital which is a most important question. Our capital resources are matters with which my colleague the Finance Minister and the Planning Commission are dealing but come back to land and water. Water is connected with the land that we want

24. 31A read: "(1) Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this part, no law providing for the acquisition by the State of any estate or of any rights therein or for the extinguishment or modification of any such rights shall be deemed to be void on the ground that it is inconsistent with, or takes away or abridges any of the rights conferred by, any provisions of this Part...."
25. Article 31B read: "Without prejudice to the generality of the provisions contained in Article 31A, none of the Acts and Regulations specified in the Ninth Schedule nor any of the provisions thereof shall be deemed to be void, on the ground that such Act, Regulation or provision is inconsistent with, or takes away or abridges any of the rights conferred by any provisions of this Part, and notwithstanding any judgement, decree or order of any court or tribunal to the contrary, each of the said Acts and Regulations shall, subject to the power of any competent Legislature to repeal or amend it, continue in force."
26. A leading Congressman of UP.

to improve and we have big river valley schemes, wells and all that. Finally we come back to the land which is the most important of all and if we do not make proper arrangements for the land, all our other schemes whether they are about grow-more-food or anything else may fail. Therefore, something in the shape of this amendment that I have suggested becomes necessary. Again, if I may say so, what is intended is to give power to this House or to a future Parliament to deal with this so that it may not feel helpless when a situation arises which calls for its intervention.

4. To G.V. Mavalankar¹

New Delhi
May 16, 1951

My dear Mr Speaker,

Thank you for your letter of the 15th May and the note on the Constitution Amendment Bill.²

I have read your note with care and, no doubt, we shall give it full consideration. I had not read your note when I spoke today in the House, but I hope that I dealt with some points at least raised in that note. As I stated then, we have been discussing this matter not only amongst ourselves, but with State Governments and with many other people for the last few months. We realise the importance of it and hence this continuous consultation. The Congress Party in the Legislature is also greatly interested and their Executive Committee appointed a sub-committee for this purpose. This sub-committee conferred with a Cabinet sub-committee appointed for the amendment of the Constitution.

We have felt the urgency of having some such amendment because the situation in the zamindari areas is becoming exceedingly difficult. As a matter of fact, the big zamindars themselves cannot cope with it and find it difficult to realise rents. We are on the eve of what might be called a revolutionary situation in rural areas in some parts of the country. To some extent, many other parts are affected also. There are strong demands for acquisition of zamindari property without any compensation at all. We are resisting these

1. JN Collection.

2. Mavalankar expressed his objections to the proposed amendments of the Constitution. His gravest objection was in respect of Articles 31A and 31B which, in his view, deprived the individual of all fundamental rights in relation to property. He thought that the most peaceful progress and reorganisation of society could be achieved by guaranteeing the security of private property.

demands, but it is, in our opinion, very important that rapid effect should be given to the Zamindari Abolition Acts. Otherwise, things may go out of control.

On the merits, I have little doubt that such legislation is desirable. You have pointed out in your letter some extreme cases of injustice. Theoretically, they are possible if Parliament is bent on them. In the same way, Parliament can pass laws of other kinds which bring injustice in their trail. We have to rely on the good sense of Parliament. You mention that the subsequent Parliament may not have the same restraint or wisdom as the present one. That is possible. It is equally possible that coming up against a blank wall of a constitutional provision, or a judicial interpretation of it, they will tend to function regardless of Constitution or law courts, as they have sometimes done in other countries on such occasions.

I think that the only safe way is to rely on the good sense and wisdom of Parliament.

Any attempt to postpone this measure rather indefinitely may well lead to very serious consequences. For the Congress it would be fatal, because they would have failed in their primary objectives. I feel therefore that any circulation of the Bill involving long delay would be unjustified and possibly dangerous. In a matter of this kind things are likely to run on what are called class lines. Lawyers generally represent a conservative element which resists social change. It is not surprising that some lawyers of the Supreme Court have expressed themselves against these provisions. Alladi Krishnaswamy Aiyar,³ however, is in favour of the changes proposed and we have been conferring with him throughout, as we have conferred with the Attorney-General.⁴

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. A prominent jurist; a member of the Constituent Assembly and one of the main draftsmen of the Constitution.

4. M.C. Setalvad.

5. Freedom of the Press¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: We have had a considerable debate on the motion that I placed before the House. I listened with due respect to the speeches made and

1. Reply to the debate on the Bill on Freedom of the Press, 18 May 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol XII & XIII, Part II, columns 9069-9086. Extracts.

I tried to profit by them. I confess that at the end of this debate I had a lurking suspicion that somehow some Members of this House, perhaps, had not quite understood the importance of this Bill or had perhaps attached certain inferences, certain ideas to it for which there was no warrant. Certain things that were said had absolutely no bearing, so far as I could see, to this Bill. I do not merely refer to the honourable Member who spoke this morning² and told us what we should do in regard to food and clothing and housing which are very important subjects but, if I may venture to say so, are totally irrelevant, to the issue before the House. But apart from that honourable Members of this House—some of them spoke in terms of heat and passion about the way we are putting curbs and restraints on the Press, about the way we were stabbing liberty and freedom, in fact about the way the executive was arming itself with all kinds of powers—and not only honourable Members, but some newspapers, even abroad in foreign countries, have talked about this Bill³ introducing all kinds of restraints on the Press and freedom of the individuals. One honourable Member described this Bill as treating the Constitution as a scrap of paper.⁴ Another honourable Member talked about the sweeping restrictions on the Press.⁵ Another said that this measure was more undemocratic than anything that has happened in the world.⁶ Now I ask you, Sir, what exactly does all this mean? Is this sense—leave out good sense—to talk in this way of this measure—to say that it puts restrictions on the Press, to say that this sweeps away the rights of the people, or to say that this is stabbing the Constitution and freedom in the back⁷ or to say that this measure gives the executive all kinds of power? I say it has nothing to do with all those things that have been said. Either the honourable Members have not taken the trouble to understand or the honourable Members have deliberately tried to misunderstand what it contains. I speak in no terms of apology. I brought forward the measure with full conviction and I intend proceeding with it and I see no reason to apologize to this House or to anybody because some individual whether he is a Member here or an outsider, says something which is not really relevant to the facts of the case.

What is this measure about which so much has been said? Sometimes in listening to the speeches I had a sense of play-acting. An honourable Member⁸

2. H.V. Kamath.

3. The Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference placed on record its opinion that the proposed amendment of Article 19(2) of the Constitution was unwarranted and uncalled for. See also *ante*, pp. 166-167.

4. Syama Prasad Mookerjee.

5. K.K. Bhattacharya; Congressman from Uttar Pradesh; practised in the Calcutta High Court, 1935-36; Dean, Faculty of Law, Allahabad University since 1947.

6. Hirdayanath Kunzru.

7. Syama Prasad Mookerjee.

8. K.K. Bhattacharya.

the other day said—I forget what he was referring to—he referred to some village plays, where the same person comes as Duryodhan⁹ and later shaves his moustaches and appears as Draupadi.¹⁰ It seems to me that some honourable Members are also playing a number of roles even in the course of the same speech and I could not understand whether there was any sequence or continuity about the line of thought he was pursuing. I beg this House to understand the measure as it is and not to import other considerations. There are many things in this wide world and this great country that are happening about which opinions may differ and they do differ but there is no reason why we should mix them up. The honourable Dr Mookerjee cannot refrain, whatever the subject—whether it relates to the stars or this earth—from bringing in Pakistan and the Partition. What relation the Partition or Pakistan has to this measure passes my comprehension. Many other things have also been said.

I want this House coolly and dispassionately to consider this measure and I do affirm with full faith that far from changing this Constitution these amendments give full effect to the Constitution as we wanted it to be. I say that with full faith. It was implicit in the Constitution when we discussed it again and again in the Constituent Assembly, and indeed it is implicit in every such Constitution and has to be implicit, if the State is to endure.

Remember also that this measure has nothing to do with making any fresh law. That is for Parliament to do, this Parliament or some other that may succeed it. So to talk about the executive grabbing powers is completely outside the mark. It may be, of course, that Parliament decides this or that at some future date. Whatever it may decide it will have to decide naturally in terms of the Constitution.

Take some of the principal amendments. The second amendment is amendment of Article 19(2). What exactly is it? It refers to friendly relations with foreign powers: it refers to the security of the State and public order and then to incitement to an offence. May I say that when I spoke on the last occasion¹¹ I did not go deeply into the wording of this clause. I rather dealt with the principle underlying it, with the difficulties we had to face and how we had attempted to get over those difficulties. I did not deal with the wording, partly because I hoped that we were going to appoint a Select Committee which would consider those words and I have no doubt that if there is a better wording to suggest they will recommend it. So far as we are concerned we had given a great deal of thought to this matter before we put it before the House. Nevertheless, if fresh wisdom dawns upon us, naturally we shall keep

9. Leader of the Kauravas and eldest son of King Dhritarashtra in *Mahabharat*, the Hindu mythological epic.

10. Wife of the Pandavas in *Mahabharat*.

11. On 16 May 1951.

our minds open in regard to the wording. I laid then stress on the principles underlying this, not on the wording.

Then again when it comes to the wording, if I may say so with all respect, one enters into the legalistic sphere, which is important, because in Constitutions we have to be careful about the wording. Nevertheless one does enter that legalistic sphere. I suppose I am enough of a lawyer to have to say something about it, if necessary. But I felt that there were better lawyers here who could deal with it more effectively. Indeed this morning we had a very able, a very exhaustive and illuminating address from my honourable colleague, the Law Minister.¹² I would rather put before the House the particular approach to this question and I do submit that in this particular approach what we have sought to do in these amendments is partly implicit in the Constitution and partly also explicit and it is partly implicit in any Constitution.

Take Article 19(2).¹³ Article 19(2) itself is some restriction on the bold statement in Article 19(1)(a). It is a restriction; there is no such thing as one hundred per cent freedom for the individual to act as he likes in any social group. This idea of individual freedom arose in the days of autocracy in every country where an autocratic ruler or a group of rulers suppressed individual freedom; therefore the idea of individual freedom arose. In a democratic society there is also that idea of individual freedom but always it has to be balanced with social freedom and the relations of the individual with the social group as well as other matters, as well as the individual not infringing on other individual's freedom. Therefore, you have to define these balances although the basic concept of individual freedom remains. Now in this Constitution the basic concept is given in that Article 19(1)(a):

All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression.

That is the basic concept. Going to clause (2) of Article 19, it says:

Nothing in sub-clause (a) of clause (1) shall affect the operation of any existing law insofar as it relates to, or prevent the State from making any law relating to libel, slander, defamation, contempt of court or any matter which offends against decency or morality or which undermines the security of, or tends to overthrow, the State.

That is to say, this clause (2) is a restriction of that bold statement of freedom. That restriction does not mean that it is the only possible restriction—it is an indication of what restrictions there may be. Other restrictions may

12. Ambedkar explained the necessity for amendments of Articles 15, 19, 29, 31 and 376 because of judgments delivered by the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

13. See *ante*, pp. 166-167.

legitimately arise. I will give you a rather ridiculous example. Suppose I choose, as a right of individual freedom, to take the conveyance I am in on the right of the road and not the left of the road. I exercise my right of individual freedom to walk on the wrong side of the road. Well, the policeman will arrest me or I will be run over by a car and that will be the end of me. There are hundred and one restrictions if you live in society, restricting your right of individual freedom if you are a social being, so that this clause (2) is a restricting clause in regard to libel, slander, morality, decency, and the security of the State. That is not an exhaustive list of those restrictions. Others are understood, are implied. And, normally speaking, it might not have been necessary to say very much about it, but because some doubt was cast about these other matters, other implied and necessary and inevitable restrictions, therefore it would become necessary to make that clear. It is nothing new. Every State must have the right of what Dr Ambedkar called the "police power" of the State. Every State has to defend itself against an external enemy or an internal enemy, and freedom is limited for that purpose. I am not for a moment going into basic things, as to why external or internal enemies arise. That depends on policy, depends on many things, but it has to defend itself and no Constitution can possibly take away that right from the State, it does not intend taking it away. It takes away the undue exercise of that right, the unfair exercise, an exercise which is partial and so on and so forth.

Therefore, clause (2) by itself cannot possibly be an exhaustive clause. Other things are implied. Normally speaking, in Constitutions, that is where there are no written Constitutions, where there are no Fundamental Rights, they naturally grow up by the Common Law or sometimes by enactment of Parliaments and the like. Where there are written Constitutions, they have grown up by judicial interpretations. Take this great Constitution of the United States of America.¹⁴ In its beginning what was it? It was only an adaptation of the colonial Constitution. Naturally, because they had been functioning under a colonial Constitution framed by the British power in America. It was an adaptation of it; it was based on it, as ours has been based on the Government of India Act, 1935. In spite of our freedom and independence, the extent to which the provisions of the 1935 Act have come into our Constitution is extraordinary. So the United States Constitution was based on the colonial Constitution. It is not that later a new Constitution was made by the United States. Possibly, probably, it would have been rather different. However they did the other thing, and that is they stuck to that Constitution, but by process of judicial interpretation they brought in what was implied in

14. In his speech, Ambedkar had referred to the provisions of the US Constitution in which there was no manifest restriction on freedom of speech. But the Supreme Court of the United States had interpreted fundamental rights consistently with reference to the security of the State.

the existence of the Constitution. They had many tussles about it. But in the course of the last one hundred and fifty years or more, gradually they built up those conventions and interpretations and those things which were implicit were made explicit.

Our difficulty here has been, frankly speaking, that something that we considered as absolutely implicit in the Constitution, something that was obvious, if looked at from the strictly narrow legalistic, literal meaning of the words is not implicit. Though obviously a thing is implicit, legalistically it may not be there—if you look at it in a legalistic way, as sometimes Judges tend to, unless they take the broader view, then immediately you narrow the scope of the Constitution, you limit the very ideas that the framers of the Constitution had.

After all nearly all the Members who are present here in this House were framers of this Constitution and they will remember the long debates we had about various matters. We spent many months over this. That does not mean, of course, that everything that we did was perfect. No doubt we shall learn by experience and try to remedy. But the fact remains that we have a good, general broad idea of what we intended. So, my first point, if I may make it, is this: that in the principal amendments that we seek to put forward, there is not an attempt at real change of the Constitution. We have only sought to bring out what is implicit and what we knew should be there and what everybody, I think, if he considers it carefully and dispassionately must recognise should be there. In regard to Article 19(2) that applies very much so.

Again there are in Article 19(2) the words “friendly relations with foreign States”. Reference was made in the course of the debate to some Act of 1932. Well, I looked it up. It was an Act to provide against publication of statements likely to prejudice the maintenance of friendly relations. This Act was originally passed in regard to the Indian States and to rulers of States outside, but adjoining India. In other words, it was meant to apply to Afghanistan and Nepal plus the States in India. The purport of the Act is this: that before any Act in a court of law against a ruler can be taken up, someone in the Government of India should authorise that man to take it up. There is also something about the power of the State to stop some publications, etc, in regard to these matters. Now, the whole thing was framed in a different context; it does not apply today at all. The Indian States have ceased to be. Of our two neighbouring countries, one of them has ceased to be so; with the other country we are on very friendly terms.

So far as I know, there is no other Act, so that unless, Parliament in the future passes any legislation in regard to these friendly relations with foreign powers, there is no Act governing or restricting anything. But whether there is an Act or not, as I think Dr Ambedkar pointed out, some things are implicit.

Obviously, however much freedom you may give to a person, if an individual does something which might result in war, it is a very serious matter. No State, in the name of freedom, can submit to actions which may result in wholesale war and destruction. It is the implied power of the State to stop any such thing happening. It may be that the State sometimes may act wrongly or rightly. But you cannot take away the power of a State to prevent a great catastrophe happening which may involve us in some great war or other.

H.V. Kamath: If the State itself does something which leads to war?

JN: Obviously, then the State is wrong, and Parliament insofar as it represents the State should pull the executive up or change it. If Parliament itself goes wrong, then what should be done? That Parliament should be replaced by another Parliament. If the people go wrong, then there is no help for it.

Anyway, I am not aware of any State, democratic, semi-democratic or other in the world today which will not pull up a person or a group which does something which is dangerous to its security or safety, from an outside power or internally. Therefore to say that Parliament should have the right to frame laws in regard to relationship with foreign powers is an inherent right of Parliament to do so. It just does not matter if it is not incorporated there. Because I do maintain with all respect that Parliament has the right and nothing in the Fundamental Rights takes it away or can take it away, because it is the basic right of the State to do that in relation to foreign powers. At any time that will be so, more specially at this time when the world is faced with great difficulties, great tensions, great dangers, possibly with grave disasters; at that time for us to ignore all this and think in terms of some academic exercise of the eighteenth century, forgetting that we are in the middle of the twentieth century, is, I submit, very far from being realistic, very far from anything that is happening in this world. So I submit that putting in some provision about friendly relations with foreign powers does not change the Constitution, does not extend it, does not limit individual freedom in the slightest degree. It is obvious. You may put it or not, but it is there. It has to be admitted.

Again, in regard to foreign powers, so far as our policy goes, which this House has approved of on many occasions, it is a policy of friendship with other nations. Now, because it is a policy of friendship with other nations it becomes all the more necessary that we should not encourage activities which lead to injury in regard to our relations with other powers. Some honourable Members pointed out what had been said in China¹⁵ or what might have been said in Russia or what is sometimes said even now in other countries, bitter

15. S.P. Mookerjee had drawn the attention of Parliament to a book issued by the Chinese Government in which Indian culture, the Government and leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru were bitterly criticized.

criticism of individuals here or of the Government. Perfectly true. I think that our newspapers and people here have also sometimes used strong language. We do not wish to come in the way of that. There is no question of stopping criticism or even strong language. But times may arise when it overshoots the mark and there is danger of disruption or a break or danger to international interests or to our relations with those powers. And so we shall have to come in there. In what way we come in or in what measure we come in will be a matter for Parliament to determine because there is no law at the present moment to stop these things.

Let us take the other matter, namely, public order. As I have said so far as the actual wording is concerned, it may perhaps be improved. This is the best that we could put forward; it can be considered in the Select Committee but the fact remains that "public order" is as much a part of the security of the State as anything. It is perfectly true that a Government or a judicial officer may interpret these words widely or narrowly; he may use it when it should not be used; that is perfectly true. Now if you are formulating an Act, it is desirable that you use words precisely and definitely so that, as far as possible, they cannot be misused; but when you are enabling Parliament to function, then again the question of narrowing and curtailing Parliament's powers does not arise. Only when Parliament passes an Act you have to observe carefully that you do not go too far and do not allow a magistrate or a judge or somebody else to exercise more powers than you want them to exercise. That I can understand, but you are merely enacting the power of Parliament, merely defining and removing doubts about them and this question of putting in a narrowing word does not arise. I am afraid we are mixing up these two ideas. We are considering as if it was an enactment giving certain powers to the executive. It is nothing of the kind. If it is only an enactment which brings out the essential and inherent power of the State in regard to these matters affecting the stability of the State, the security of the State, affecting public order in the widest sense of the word and this inherent power of the State is merely mentioned there. Why is this amendment brought? It is because some doubts were cast on it and I am quite sure that at the time of the making of this Constitution, if most of us had been asked about it, there would not have been any doubt in our minds but in recent months some courts in the land have cast doubts and because they differed, I think it was the Bihar High Court which said something to the effect that preaching of murder is allowed under this clause.

Honourable Members: Punjab.

JN: I think it was Bihar. I am sorry, I may be wrong and some other Judge also agreed with that somewhere. I think that Allahabad and Nagpur disagreed

with that view; it may be they have differed but the point is I have no doubt—it may be that I am wrong about the names of the High Courts—anyhow there has been some disagreement and it is quite possible, as I said, that ultimately in course of time, conventions and judicial interpretation will be established by the Supreme Court and other courts, which would remove these doubts from the public mind, but at the present moment, the doubts persist and the present moment is difficult moment....

H.N. Kunzru: Has any reference been made on the matter to the Supreme Court?

JN: By whom?

H.N. Kunzru: By Government.

JN: No.

H.N. Kunzru: By the President?

JN: No, because Government does not refer to the Supreme Court any matters of policy. It is for Parliament and the Government to decide the policy and not the Supreme Court. I am surprised at the honourable Member's question.

Hussain Imam asked for the Law Minister to clarify.

JN: The Law Minister will not enlighten the House while I am speaking. May I confess to a feeling of great surprise at the questions that my honourable friend Pandit Kunzru has put?¹⁶ When I give the example of a certain High Court expressing a certain opinion, or giving a decision, or whatever it was, that even preaching murder was justified, that by itself is an extreme example that does not cover the whole field. Although my honourable friend has pointed out that the decision of the High Court, according to them, flowed from a previous ruling of the Supreme Court—may be so—I say, suppose this matter went up to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court decided, "No, that is a wrong view; to preach murder is not allowed under the Constitution", that particular thing will have been decided. It will not have decided any general principle. Suppose a man preaches cutting off the hand of a person or removing his feet. Only preaching murder is not allowed. Naturally, courts do not lay

16. H.N. Kunzru pointed out Nehru's earlier statement in which he had said "In view of the different views of the High Court on so important a matter as punishment for incitement to murder, it was necessary to change the Constitution" and asked him (Nehru) to clarify his point.

down broad policies. They function on the facts before them and they give a certain opinion which we must accept and respect. Therefore, when questions of broader policies are concerned, you do not go to the courts. Parliament decides or the Government functioning under Parliament decides. Where it is the interpretation of a particular legal issue, we go to the Supreme Court or some other court. Now, doubts have arisen. High Courts are deciding differently. Where even the Supreme Court brings about a certain measure of uniformity, that uniformity is confined to that particular issue. We shall have to wait for 50 or 100 rulings on various issues to develop into a consistent policy. That is why I referred to the American judicial interpretations which have, gradually in the course of 100 or 150 years, brought about that uniformity. How are we to bring that about in the course of a few months or years, when daily dangers face us, and daily we have to meet particular situations? Therefore, because doubts have arisen, because delays occur, because litigation goes on, because hundreds and, perhaps, I am not sure, I believe, thousands of applications are made before the Supreme Court burdening the honourable Judges with this work, because of all this, we feel that it is desirable in the public interest, in the interests of public policy as well as in the interests of individual freedom, to define this power clearly also, which was implicit in the Constitution. It has ceased to be implicit because of these doubts and interpretations and therefore it has to be made implicit. Again, if I may say so, all that it means is that Parliament gets that power; the executive does not. It is for this Parliament or the future Parliament to exercise, presumably the next Parliament, because it is very doubtful whether this Parliament will have the time or the leisure to consider this matter.

Then again the words "incitement to an offence": I confess that taking the words as they are, they cover a wide field; may be any offence, a minor offence or a major offence. That is true. Again, I would say that you are not for the moment dealing with an enactment giving a punishment. You are dealing with the broad powers of Parliament. That is a difficult thing and that is the difficulty that we had in thinking about it. Are we going to make a long list of the offences here in the Constitution? You cannot do it. It is very difficult and it will make it more and more rigid, with schedules of offences attached to it. You have to do that sort of thing when you have to deal with a specific law. But here we are merely indicating what was supposed to be implicit. We are making a broad generalisation and the broad generalisation may cover rather trivial offences. But obviously one must take it for granted that when use is made of this authority or power, Parliament and honourable Members will see to it that there is no wrong application or misuse of it....¹⁷

17. S.P. Mookerjee said that he was referring to Article 19(2) under which "the existing law will be revalidated and given retrospective effect."

Oh, I understand. All the existing laws will not be validated just automatically, just as all the existing laws were not made invalid either, by the Court's judgment, if the judgment was in that way—I speak subject to correction. But as I understand the position, it is this. Some judgment of the superior court might either invalidate some particular law or some part of the law, and to that extent, if this Bill is passed, it would remove that invalidity. To what extent that particular law is valid or not would depend even now, if necessary, on an interpretation, whether in terms of the Constitution, as amended, it is valid or not. Such a thing would not automatically follow. May I beg the House to consider this question from a practical point of view? No doubt, there are these laws—plenty of them. There are the laws of sedition and the others. Let us take the law of sedition. Now, I cannot conceive that that is going to function or will be allowed to function or can function in future, unless it comes under the other clause of endangering the security of the State etc, etc.

As the House knows, we have been functioning for the last three and a half years as an independent country—more than that—three years and ten months, I think. And these judicial pronouncements have come only in the course of the last seven or eight months—I do not know the exact dates.¹⁸ Now, how far in the course of these three years, quite apart from these judicial pronouncements, had we recourse to these laws? That is for the House to consider. I cannot give an answer straightaway. If my memory is right, we have hardly ever used them. Most of them have not been used, and they cannot be used in the circumstances easily. Maybe there were one or two odd cases here and there. But, the fact is they have no value left and Parliament can put an end to them or have them revised as it chooses. What I mean to say is that from the practical point of view, there is no danger. First of all the validity of the Act will be judged in accordance with the Constitution, as amended. It does not automatically become valid. If it does come within the scope of the amended Constitution, it will be considered as valid; but it will have to be considered and judged. But from the strictly practical point of view, those Acts are not alive. If not wholly dead, they are half dead, though one or two might not be. But generally speaking, there is no fear of any misuse of them arising. Take any Press Law.¹⁹ Really the position is this. House can take up these laws, put an end to them, modify them or do what it likes with them. There might be an interval, possibly of a few months, but there is no fear that during these few months, some misuse might occur. It is because of that that I ventured to remind the House that during the last three

18. The Preventive Detention Act, the Zamindari Abolition Act, the Representation of the People Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act were passed during this period.

19. S.P. Mookerjee asked about the Emergency Press Law.

years I do not think it can be said that there has been any marked misuse of these laws. The fact of the matter is the Press in India functions quite differently from what it used to. The Press is not an external force. It is a powerful force outside, but it is something internal. In previous times it had to influence an alien Government and the alien Government could suppress it or do injury to it. But today it is much more powerful, for a variety of reasons. But apart from the influence it exercises on the outside world though it is not of the Government, it is part of Parliament, if I may say so. It can make a great noise if anything wrong happens to it. So, practically speaking, there is no danger during the intervening period and when you revise these things, put an end to them or put them in the right shape as Parliament considers proper.

I regret to say that I have not seen those recommendations of the Press Laws Enquiry Committee and hence I have no knowledge of the same but the honourable Member will see that this question can only arise if this law is passed.²⁰

Reference has been made to newspapers in this country and to the freedom of the Press. I venture to say that so far as I am concerned and so far as our Government is concerned they believe entirely in the freedom of the Press. Mr Deshbandhu Gupta was good enough to read out some extracts from the speech I delivered sometime back.²¹ I completely accept what I said then and I am prepared to repeat it but in repeating it I may say that in that very speech I also drew the attention to them to put an end to them.

But there is another matter which I may mention in this connection and that is this. We talk of the freedom of the Press. What exactly does it mean, I ask? So much freedom of the Press we have got today. But the freedom only means suppression or lack of suppression by governmental authority. When huge Press chains spring up preventing the individual freedom of the Press, when practically the Press in India is controlled by three or four groups of individuals, what is that Press?

Now I come to Articles 31, 31A and 31B. May I remind the House or such Members of the House as were also Members of the Constituent Assembly of the long debates that we had on this issue? Now the whole object of these Articles in the Constitution was to take away and I say so deliberately, to

20. Deshbandhu Gupta wanted to know whether "the Government will at least accept the recommendations made by the Press Laws Enquiry Committee which were not accepted in view of the provision in the Constitution."

21. Deshbandhu Gupta mentioned that Nehru had said that the Press of India enjoyed greater freedom than the Press of any other country and a very large section of the Indian Press had made use of this freedom with restraint and responsibility and had contributed to the building up of healthy public opinion, but a small section of the irresponsible news-sheets and periodicals had indulged in writings repugnant to the moral conscience of the society.

take away the question of zamindari and land reform from the purview of the courts. That is the whole object of the Constitution and we put in some proviso etc in regard to Article 31. It was deliberately excluded from the jurisdiction of the courts. Now how does it come in under their jurisdiction? Here the Bihar High Court comes in. The Bihar High Court brings in Article 14 of all Articles and applies it to a question on land reform.²² Article 14 says:

The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

I am reminded, if I say so, that one has to respect the majesty of the law. The majesty of the law is such that it looks with an even eye on the millionaire and the beggar and whether the millionaire steals a loaf of bread or a beggar steals the sentence given is alike. It is all very well to talk about the equality of the law for the millionaire and the beggar but the millionaire has not much incentive to steal a loaf of bread, while the starving beggar has, perhaps, and this business of the equality of the law may very well mean, as it has come to mean often enough, making rigid the existing inequalities before the law. That is a dangerous thing and it is dangerous in a changing society and it is completely opposed to the whole structure and method of this Constitution and what is laid down in the Directive Principles.

What are we to do about it? What is the Government to do? If a Government has not even the power to legislate to bring about gradually that equality, the Government fails to do what it has been commanded to do by this Constitution. That is why I said that the amendments I have placed before the House are meant to give effect to this Constitution. I am not changing the Constitution by an iota: I am merely making it stronger. I am merely giving effect to the real intentions of the framers of the Constitution and to the wording of the Constitution, unless it is interpreted in a very narrow and legalistic way. Here is a definite intention in the Constitution. This question of land reform is under Article 31(2) and this clause tries to take it away from the purview of the courts and somehow Article 14 is brought in. That kind of thing is not surely the intention of the framers of the Constitution. Here again I may say that the Bihar High Court held that view but the Allahabad and Nagpur High Courts held a contrary view.²³ That is true. There

22. On 12 March 1951, a special Bench of the Patna High Court held the Bihar Land Reforms Act, which sought to abolish the zamindari system in Bihar, to be unconstitutional on the ground that it transgressed Article 14 of the Constitution. The Government, therefore, moved for amendment of the Constitution in Parliament. A committee consisting of four members—B.R. Ambedkar, C. Rajagopalachari, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and N.V. Gadgil—was constituted on 31 March 1951 to examine the proposed amendments.
23. On 10 May 1951, the Allahabad High Court declared that the Uttar Pradesh Zamindari Abolition Act was valid, as the legislature was competent to press it.

is confusion and doubt. Are we to wait for this confusion and doubt gradually to resolve itself, while powerful agrarian movements grow up? May I remind the House that this question of land reform is most intimately connected with food production? We talk about food production and grow-more-food and if there is agrarian trouble and insecurity of land tenure nobody knows what is to happen. Neither the zamindar nor the tenant can devote his energies to food production because there is instability. Therefore these long arguments and these repeated appeals in courts are dangerous to the State, from the security point of view, from the food production point of view and from the individual point of view, whether it is that of the zamindar or the tenant or any intermediary.

I am not for the moment, as I said, saying much about the exact wording. It has been dealt with thoroughly and the Select Committee will no doubt deal with it.

May I now go back to Article 15? I tried to make clear on the last occasion when I spoke that in what we were trying to add there was really not the slightest attempt at changing the Constitution or amending it in any real sense. It was to lay a certain emphasis on something which had been adequately emphasised in other parts of the Constitution, but again because some doubts had arisen; it is perfectly true that those doubts had arisen in another connection. Although there is a connection, nevertheless it is another matter. Looking at that narrow issue that arose in Madras,²⁴ for my part this amendment, I should like to say, is not intended to be a communal amendment, or to help in any way a communal approach to this problem. We must distinguish between the communal approach and the approach of helping our weaker, backward brothers and sisters. And, if I may say so, although it is my amendment, thinking about it I do not particularly like the words "backward class of citizens" and I hope the Select Committee may find a better wording. What I mean is this: it is the backward individual citizen that we should help. Why should we brand groups and classes into backward and forward?

However, it is a fact that certain groups or classes are backward, but I do not wish to brand them as such or treat them as such.

In this connection, may I say that perhaps a group or class which deserves greater sympathy from this House are tribal folk, whether in the North-East Frontier tract or in Central India or elsewhere? We have many of our colleagues in this House representing the Scheduled Castes and they help us not only in our work but keep us up to the mark in regard to the necessities of the Scheduled Castes, but we have very few persons in this House to speak for

24. A member had referred to the decision of the Supreme Court on the communal G.O. of the Madras Government, under Article 29(2), that no restriction could be placed with regard to admission to colleges on grounds of community, caste or religion. This was said to have led to considerable upheaval and agitation among the students.

the Scheduled Tribes. Therefore, it should be the peculiar concern and care of this House to look after the interests of the Scheduled Tribes and their advancement in every way, and when we add these words to Article 15, or maybe any other words in addition to them, we certainly include the Scheduled Tribes.

Some doubts again arose because of the judgment of the Allahabad High Court in regard to the nationalisation of public transport services.²⁵ Now, we have been following a policy which is normally called a "mixed" economy. We encourage private enterprise and at the same time we extend the activities of the State in regard to these matters, that is, more and more, there is nationalisation, socialisation of services, etc. It is essential, therefore, that the State should have power to do that. Again, we thought this was implicit, that nobody could challenge it but as it has been challenged it should be clarified. And may I say this in this matter, that this is a process going on all over the world? Even in a country like the United States of America which is more committed to the individualistic and capitalistic form of State than any other country you will find that this progressive socialisation is going on of public utilities and the like. The progress made in this matter has been very considerable there. But in this country and in countries situated like India where private enterprise, howsoever you may encourage it, is limited in scope and resources, inevitably the State has to come in and the State must have the power to nationalise completely or partly anything that it takes up, and therefore this elucidation has been put in.

We have heard a great deal about democracy, about freedom and the like in the course of this debate. In some criticisms made outside this House, in newspapers outside this country even, some of us, and especially I, have been criticised as forgetting the stand we made, or what we stood for in the past days. Well, it is very difficult to judge oneself and it may be that unconsciously some of us may have slipped—I am not aware of that fact. So far as we are concerned, we still try to act up to those ideals of democracy and freedom. But it was rather a mixed pleasure to me to hear praise of democracy and freedom coming from some honourable Members of this House who were not remarkably associated with these concepts in the past—in fact, who opposed them! Anyhow this is a welcome change and we hope it will lead to a better understanding between us in the future.

One thing rather surprised me. I think it was Pandit Kunzru who asked: "Why do you make these changes when you have got the Preventive Detention

25. The UP Government had introduced a scheme to nationalise motor transport on a piece-meal basis so that it would not be necessary for the State to obtain a licence for running buses within the territory that they had earmarked for themselves but private bus owners would have to obtain a licence. That decision was challenged in the Allahabad High Court on the ground that it involved discrimination. Ambedkar remarked that if nationalisation was a desirable thing, then the doctrine of non-discrimination in matters of nationalisation should be got rid of.

Act?" First of all—again I may repeat—these changes do not give any power to do anything; but apart from this Pandit Kunzru and this House will not like the use of the Preventive Detention Act all the time, or at any time, for the matter of that, unless one is compelled by some circumstances to do it for a short while. So, to take that as a standby is a dangerous thing. We want to put an end to it—to use it as far as possible.

I hope, therefore, that this House will agree to refer this Bill to a Select Committee.

6. To Deshbandhu Gupta¹

New Delhi
May 20, 1951

My dear Deshbandhu,

I have just received your letter of May 20th.²

I told you and your colleagues this morning that in proposing an amendment to Article 19(2), we were not thinking of the Press at all.³ We had certain other considerations in mind affecting the law and order situation in the country and both the domestic and international situation. I recognise that even though we did not have the Press in mind, the Press might be affected by this amendment. Because of that, I made it clear to you that we were prepared to ensure, so far as we could, that no adverse effect was produced on the Press by this amendment. It was also proposed that legislation should be brought in Parliament, as soon as this can be conveniently done, to replace such laws as may be presumed to continue to exist, by a wider and more comprehensive approach to the question.

This legislation, we hope, would affirm the freedom of the Press and we intended consulting responsible newspapermen in regard to it.

You say that such assurances as we may give can have no constitutional validity. That may be partly true for that intervening period before further legislative action is taken. But from a practical point of view, no difficulty

1. JN Collection.
2. In his letter, Gupta as President, AINEC, wrote that he had been directed by the AINEC to convey to Nehru that the "Government should drop the proposed amendment to Article 19, which, in its view, is not called for in the present circumstances" or it should postpone it to a later date "so that public opinion may be fully elicited on the subject."
3. On 20 May, Nehru assured the delegation of AINEC that (1) the proposed amendment of old repressive laws would not be used against the Press, (2) State Governments would be directed to that effect, (3) the Government would bring forward, as soon as possible, a comprehensive legislation in consultation with the AINEC, and (4) he would make a statement to this effect in Parliament.

should arise. The intervening period, so far as we are concerned, need not be long. This matter will be dealt with by Parliament, not by State Legislatures. Even apart from these assurances and the action we will take during this intervening period, it is by no means the case that the various old laws suddenly come to life and bloom again because of the passing of the amendment. That would of course depend largely on the wording of the amendment and in any event such laws will have to be interpreted by the judiciary in the context not only of that amendment but of the entire Constituion.

I really do not see why your Committee should, in the face of what I have clearly stated, have any fears or anxieties about this relatively brief intervening period. After all, you have experience of the past few years when these Press Laws were theoretically alive. Nothing much, so far as I know, happened. From now onwards, the position will be stronger because of the determination of Government and the assurances given to you in this behalf.

You suggest, on behalf of your Committee, that the Government should drop the proposed amendment to Article 19. Or, in the alternative, should postpone consideration of it to a later date. I tried to explain to you this morning that we are unable to do so. We have suggested that amendment for a variety of reasons unconnected with the Press and we would be failing in discharging our responsibility if we did not pay due regard to those weighty reasons. You are considering this matter from a particular point of view, namely the effect on the freedom of the Press. We are prepared to pay full regard to this both in considering the wording of this amendment and in regard to the future, as I have said above. But we cannot obviously ignore a large number of other considerations which have great weight.

You suggest, as an alternative course, that Government should insert in the Constitution a new Article or part of Article 1. I really do not see the necessity for this but, apart from necessity, it is not possible to introduce a new Article in Select Committee or in the present Bill. That would be going beyond the original Bill and would not be permissible according to our rules and procedure.

Before I received your letter, I asked Satya Narayan Sinha⁴ to arrange a brief meeting tomorrow at which you, Devadas Gandhi,⁵ Goenka⁶ and Shiva Rao⁷ might be present. I have suggested 10.30 a.m. in my office in Parliament House for this meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. He was the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs at that time.
5. Managing Editor, *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi.
6. Ramnath Goenka, Managing Editor, *Indian Express*.
7. Correspondent, *The Hindu*, (Madras) and the *Manchester Guardian*.

7. To T.T. Krishnamachari¹

New Delhi
May 22, 1951

My dear T.T.,²

I received your note late this evening. Probably you wrote it this morning or afternoon. The Select Committee finished its labours this evening. I feel quite exhausted.

I appreciate the point you raise. I think that some considerable improvement has been made in the draft from the point of view of toning it down. There is risk in it, but I think it can largely be avoided by the action we take here.

I confess I do not like the word "restriction" or "reasonable" added on to it. So far as I can see, the courts have always the right to consider any legislation even if this is passed after this amendment. It is true that if this amendment is passed, they will be somewhat restricted in their interpretation. But I feel that putting in the word "reasonable" would be an invitation for every such case to go to the courts with ensuing uncertainty.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.
2. Congressman from Madras and Member of Parliament at that time; Member, Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution.

8. To Deshbandhu Gupta¹

New Delhi
May 25, 1951

My dear Deshbandhu,

I have your letter of the 25th May.² I am greatly surprised to read it. The merits of the matter have been considered so very fully that there would be little point in my discussing them here. You will, no doubt, see the full report of the Select Committee.

1. JN Collection.
2. Deshbandhu Gupta thanked Nehru for conceding the demand of the AINEC that there should be no whittling down of the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by Article 19, in the Amendment to Article 19(2). But, he added that the remarks of some of Nehru's colleagues had pained the Press.

I do not think any of my colleagues require pressure or argument to convince them of the basic principle of the freedom of the Press. The argument that took place largely related to the desirability or otherwise of phrasing the amendment so as to bring in the judiciary to a larger extent than otherwise. Of course, in any event, the judiciary always comes into an interpretation of the Constitution.

You refer in your letter to Mr Gadgil's³ speech made at the Party meeting. That was, of course, his own personal speech and had nothing to do with the Government or the Cabinet. I have shown your letter to him and he tells me that whatever he might have said had no connection with the freedom of speech or of the Press. He merely expressed his opinion that editors or managers of newspapers, who get advertisements from Government, should be included in the category of those contractors who might be disqualified. Most of us do not agree with that view, but in any event it had nothing to do with the freedom of the Press. It might even be argued the other way that the freedom of the Press might be affected by their desire to get Government advertisements.

I do not see, therefore, what this has got to do with the Constitution Amendment Bill and Article 19.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. N.V. Gadgil was the Minister for Works, Production and Supply at that time.

9. To B.C. Roy¹

New Delhi
May 25, 1951

My dear Bidhan,

I received your telegram about the Constitution Amendment Bill and have answered it.² You can have no idea whatever of the tremendous difficulties we have had with this Bill and we are not out of the wood yet. Till the last

1. JN Collection.

2. In his telegram of 24 May 1951, B.C. Roy recommended the inclusion in the Ninth Schedule of West Bengal Land Development and Planning Act 1948, West Bengal Requisition and Acquisition Act 1948 and West Bengal Requisitioned Land (Continuance of Powers) Act 1951. He also recommended substitution of the word "Land" by "Estate" in Article 31A.

moment I shall not know whether we can have the requisite two-thirds number for passing these clauses.

Your proposal to include other and all kinds of Acts in the Ninth Schedule is out of the question now. But even apart from this, your Acts have nothing to do with the category of zamindari legislation that we are dealing with and their inclusion would do some violence to the object of the amendments. The definition of an "Estate" too, as you suggest, was long discussed in the Select Committee and ultimately rejected.

Yours,
Jawahar

10. To Rajendra Prasad¹

New Delhi
May 25, 1951

My dear Mr President,

I have just received your letter of the 25th May enclosing a note in regard to certain proposals for the amendment of the Constitution.²

The note you were good enough to send me on the 30th April was read out by me at a Cabinet meeting and was given full consideration. We did not think it desirable to circulate copies of that to Members of the Cabinet or to refer to it at any length in the minutes of the Cabinet. We felt that there might be a possibility of a leakage if we adopted this course and it would be exceedingly unfortunate if the public became aware that the President held a contrary opinion to that of the Cabinet in such a matter and was pressing for its adoption by the Cabinet.

As you are aware, the Bill for the amendment of the Constitution has been discussed with great thoroughness both in Parliament and the Select Committee, as well as in the Press and by the outside public. Possibly few measures have received this amount of consideration and acute analysis. In the Select Committee, which was composed of 21 Members of Parliament, including practically all the leaders of the Opposition, we discussed every

1. JN Collection.

2. The President expressed his objection in regard to the amendment to the Constitution which, in his view, was premature and uncalled for at that stage. He further pointed out the difficulties involved in the amendments of Article 19 and Article 31 and the fact that the proposed amendments would raise certain fundamental issues relating to the separate functions of the Parliament and courts.

phase of it repeatedly for four full days, often meeting both in the morning and the afternoon. In addition to the Select Committee Members, we invited a number of other MPs to join us in our discussion.

Before the Bill took shape, the matter was considered by a sub-committee of the Cabinet and a committee appointed by the Congress Party in the Parliament. These two committees held consultations together. We consulted also eminent lawyers, including the Attorney-General and Shri Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar. Both of them were clearly of opinion that it was within the competence of Parliament to consider and pass this measure. There was some slight difference of opinion in regard to the wording. Even that difference has now been resolved by the addition of the word "reasonable" before restrictions in Clause 19(2).

After this very full consideration of this subject from every point of view, the Cabinet have come to certain firm conclusions, which are now embodied in the Select Committee's report. The Cabinet, in fact, met again to give further consideration to this matter yesterday morning. The Government is convinced of the necessity as well as the validity of the amendments proposed.

I shall certainly place your note before the Cabinet, as desired by you. I shall do so by reading it out at a meeting of the Cabinet. I do not propose to circulate this for fear of leakage and undesirable publicity. I trust also that your office has not sent copies of this note to anyone else.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar¹

New Delhi
May 26, 1951

My dear Alladi,

Thank you for your letter of May 24. We have had a great deal of trouble with this Constitution Amendment Bill. I am grateful for all the help that you have given. We are not out of the wood yet, although, on the whole, the Select Committee's Report has had a favourable response. I am sending you this Report separately.

I am enclosing a note I received from the President yesterday.² Also a copy of my reply to him. The President raises rather subtle points. I shall

1. JN Collection.

2. See the preceding item.

be grateful if you could let me have a note on the points raised by the President.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. Bill to Amend the Constitution¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: I beg to move:

That the Bill to amend the Constitution of India, as reported by the Select Committee, be taken into consideration.

The Select Committee considered this matter for six days, and yet perhaps to say that it considered it for six days does not exactly convey the right impression, because the amount of time and thought that it gave to it probably represented much more than six days. The Committee consisted of many honourable Members of this House holding a variety of opinions and pressing them, quite rightly, with all the force at their command. And it was our wish and attempt in this Committee to come, as far as we could, to a large measure of common understanding because it was a serious matter—and an amendment of the Constitution is always a serious matter—and we tried to find common ground. And may I say, that in effect, we did find a great measure of common ground, and even though there are a number of minutes of dissent attached to this report, I think that the common ground we found in the course of our deliberations was far greater than might be expected by an unwary reader of these minutes of dissent? Nevertheless there is no doubt that there was and is a measure of dissent, and I do not deny that. But I think perhaps the emphasis or stress laid on the dissent in those minutes of dissent is greater or appears to be greater than actually existed in the deliberations of the Committee. I am merely trying to point out that we did approach this question, not in a partisan spirit, but in a spirit of trying to understand, of trying to weigh and balance the opinions of our critics and trying to find a way out which would, as far as

1. 29 May 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol XII & XIII, Part II, columns 9612–9634.

possible, be satisfactory to them as well as to others. And I think, on the whole, we succeeded. Therefore, the report that I presented to the House is, I believe, an improvement on the original Bill that I placed before the House. I cannot say, of course, that what I put before the House is perfect in all respects, because there is no perfection in such matters. Opinions may differ and where there is an attempt to find a middle way, often there is a certain dissatisfaction on either side. But I think that the report does represent a very hard and very continuous attempt to find as good language as we could possibly do, to give expression to our intentions, without doing violence to any part or any intention of the Constitution. Indeed, as I said at an earlier stage, the amendments we sought to put in, however worded, were really meant more to amplify and clarify than to make a change in any part of the Constitution. But naturally any amplification and clarification involves some change in the interpretation and some change in effect. That is true. But keeping before us all the time the spirit which animates the Constitution and those who made it, we felt that we were not going beyond it, but rather attempting to clarify it.

In the minutes of dissent stress is laid on the fact that this Constitution has only been in existence for sixteen months, and it is too short a period for us to try to amend it or to improve upon it. Now, I would not venture to criticize that statement. And yet I think that to lay stress on sixteen months in this connection has little bearing on the subject, as if after sixteen years we will be in a better position to judge. No doubt we would be, if we are there. In the long run it may be so, but it has often been said to those who talk about long run that we shall all be dead anyhow by then. Now, the question is not whether the Constitution has been in existence for months or for years, but rather what is necessary to be done, because of the experience we have had. Because of the conditions that face us, if something is necessary, then it does not matter whether it is sixteen months or sixteen weeks, if you like, but if it is necessary then the time factor does not count at all. Therefore, the whole basis should be whether such a change is necessary or not.

Now, a fair number of amendments have been suggested² and as the House knows, many of them are rather of a technical or formal nature, being attempts to get over some slight difficulty that had arisen, without any interference with any basic provisions of the Constitution. There are in fact, two or three, if you like, matters that are considered more important and more basic—those relating specially to Articles 19, 31 and 15. I do not want to take the time of the House at this stage in referring to the other Articles in the report, because there is little dissent in regard to them, although one honourable Member of the Select Committee has objected to the phraseology

2. Amendments were suggested by S.P. Mookerjee, N.G. Ranga, Naziruddin Ahmad, Hukam Singh, Sarangdhar Das, Arun Chandra Guha and H.V. Kamath.

of one or two. But the meaning behind them is accepted and if it is necessary to change the phraseology by a word here or a word there in order to bring out the meaning more clearly, surely we shall have no objection. We have tried to give it the best wording we could think of.

Now I come to deal with those three specific Articles to which a great deal of argument has been attached. There is Article 15(2) or 15(4) as it is proposed to make it, that is to say, the clause which says that nothing in Article 15(2) or in Article 29(2) should come in the way of our making special provisions for certain groups or classes, etc, which are not defined exactly, but indicated there. I wonder if the House remembers that when I referred to this during the earlier stages of this Bill I mentioned that by an oversight the Bill as printed then had left out a small but rather important matter, that is, in clause relating to Article 15 we had said at that time in the printed Bill that nothing in Article 15(2) will come in the way, etc. What we had intended saying, in fact what we had decided to say was that "nothing in Article 15 or in Article 29(2)" but unfortunately owing to a slight error, the words "Article 29(2)" were left out. I mention this clearly merely to indicate that this was not an afterthought on our part. It was an error for which I take full share. It was not an afterthought to include Article 29(2) because we had decided about it previous to putting it in the Bill. There were two views in regard to Article 29(2). It was the view of many eminent people that Article 29(2) in this particular context does not affect the matter at all. It does not come in the way at all, and yet, in another context Article 29(2) had been referred to and because of the certain doubt in people's minds that although the best opinion was that it does not come in the way, nevertheless, there was a hesitation or doubt and we thought that that doubt should be removed.

Without going into the details of this Article or of the amendment proposed, I wish to say a few words about—shall I say—our basic ideas on this subject. Why have we done this and why has it been thought that these Articles come in the way of doing something that we wish to do? The House knows very well and there is no need for trying to hush it up, that this particular matter in this particular shape arose because of certain happenings in Madras. Because the Government of the State of Madras issued a G.O.—I do not know the details of it—by making certain reservations, etc, for certain classes or certain communities—rather for all communities—and the High Court of Madras said that this G.O. was not in order, was against the spirit or letter of the Constitution etc. I do not for an instant challenge the right of the High Court of Madras to pass that order. Indeed from a certain point of view it seems to me, if I may say so with all respect, that their argument was quite sound and valid. That is to say, if communities as such are brought into the picture, it does go against certain explicit or implied provisions of the Constitution. Nevertheless, while that is quite valid and we bow to the decision of the High Court of Madras in

that matter, the fact remains that we have to deal with the situation where for a variety of causes for which the present generation is not to blame, the past has the responsibility, there are groups, classes, individuals, communities, if you like, who are backward. They are backward in many ways economically, socially, educationally; sometimes they are not backward in one of these respects and yet backward in another. The fact is therefore that if we wish to encourage them in regard to these matters, we have to do something special for them. We come up against this difficulty that we talk on the one hand in our Directive Principles of Policy of removing inequalities, in raising people up in every way socially, educationally, economically, reducing the distances which separate groups or classes of individuals from each other, we cannot separate them entirely, we cannot make a fool a wise man or make a wise man a fool, individuals are clever or not clever, individuals are tall or short, thin or fat and nobody tries to have similar rotundity either in the mind or body; but we do wish to give the same opportunities to everyone so that he can take full advantage of those opportunities and grow to the full stature as far as that stature allows it and if anything comes in the way of achieving this, we should remove that. It is not an easy matter, it is not a thing to be done quickly and suddenly when we have a vast population.

Yet, again, there is one Member³ who has pointed out in his minute of dissent that when we talk of people or groups as backward, whom are we thinking of. Because 80 per cent—I do not know what percentage it is—are backward in all these respects. That is perfectly true and yet we have to tackle the problem. It is no good saying that because 80 per cent are backward, so we must accept the position. We have to give them opportunities—economic opportunities, educational opportunities and the like. Now in doing that we have been told that we come up against some provisions in the Constitution which rather lay down some principles of equality or some principles of non-discrimination etc. So we arrive at a peculiar tangle. We cannot have equality because in trying to attain equality we come up against some principles of equality. That is a very peculiar position. We cannot have equality because we cannot have non-discrimination because if you think in terms of giving a lift up to those who are down, you are somehow affecting the present *status quo* undoubtedly. Therefore you are said to be discriminating because you are affecting the present *status quo*. Therefore if this argument is correct, then we cannot make any major change in that respect because every change means a

3. H.N. Kunzru said that a Central authority should determine which classes should be regarded as backward so that a uniform standard might be observed in respect of the specification of such classes pending the report of the Commission referred to in Article 40 of the Constitution. A provision similar to the one contained in Articles 41 and 42 of the Constitution was necessary to enable the President to decide which classes should be regarded as backward.

change in the *status quo*, whether economic or in any sphere of public or private activity. Whatever law you may make, you have to make some change somewhere. Therefore we have to come to grips with this subject in some other way.

Take another very important approach of ours, that is, in our attempt gradually or rapidly to realize an egalitarian society or some society where these differences are not great, apart from national or physical differences, in our attempt to do that, we want to put an end to or try to put an end to all those infinite divisions that have grown up in our social life or in our social structure—we may call them by any name you like, the caste system or religious divisions etc. There are of course economic divisions but we realize them and we try to deal with them not always very satisfactorily. But in the structure that has grown up—quite apart from the religious point of view or the philosophical aspect of it—this is the structure of society with its vast numbers of fissures or divisions. Now, to get rid of that in order to build, not only to give opportunity to each individual in India to grow but also to build up a united nation where each individual does not think so much of his particular group or caste but thinks of the larger community—that is one of our objectives. On the other hand, while that may be our objective, the fact remains that there are these large numbers of divisions and fissures in our social life, though I think they are growing less. We are gradually obliterating all those hard and fast laws that divide them but nevertheless the process is slow and we cannot ignore the present. We cannot ignore existing facts. Therefore one has to keep a balance between the existing fact as we find it and the objective and ideal that we aim at. If we stick to the existing fact alone, then we are static and unchanging and we give up all the objectives we have or the Directive Principles of Policy that are laid down in the Constitution. That of course we cannot do, and must not do. On the other hand if we talk only about those Directive Principles, etc, ignoring existing facts, then we may talk logic and we may talk fine sense even in a way but it has no relation to facts and it becomes artificial, it becomes slightly adventurish and therefore not realistic enough.

So we have to find a middle way, that is in keeping with the objective or the ideal in view, taking steps which gradually carry us in that direction and yet not ignoring the existing facts with which we have to deal—we have to deal with them anyhow even if you have to deal with it in the sense of fighting against the existing situation.

These were the difficulties and the House will understand that in grappling with this problem one can lay emphasis on this aspect or that aspect of it, because both aspects are important and the real difficulty comes in finding a balance between the two. It is very easy to say to any Member that it is a simple problem which requires an aye or nay. This is good or that is bad. But

normally the problems we have to face cannot be answered easily by ayes and nays. We have to consider them in the total context of things. We have to consider them in their relation to a hundred other things and thereby bring the ideal into some relation to the actual. These were the matters at the back of our minds as we discussed this matter from hour to hour in the Select Committee.

I think I may say with perfect truth that every single Member of the Select Committee recognised the desirability of giving these opportunities for growth to those who in any sense may be considered backward. There was no doubt in any Member's mind but what some Members were afraid of in doing so was, might not this be abused, might this be utilised for the accentuation of the very class or communal divisions which have done us so much injury and which we have been trying to get rid of. This fact troubled and rightly troubled their minds as it must trouble the House and each one of us. So we tried to find a middle way and I submit that the wording we have adopted in this Article is more or less a successful way of meeting this difficulty and find the middle way.

You must have read an earlier paragraph in the report which says:

Some apprehensions have been expressed in respect to this amendment. The Select Committee is of the view that this provision is not likely to be, and cannot indeed be, misused by any Government for perpetuating any class discrimination against the spirit of the Constitution, or for treating non-backward classes as backward for the purpose of conferring privileges on them.

We have said so and we earnestly hope that if and when this provision is passed it will not be misused. Nobody can guarantee against misuse or some kind of special or undesirable use by any authority of any provision you may make. We can only try our best to create the conditions where this would not be so. What I wish to assure this House about is this, that we are alive to the possibility of this kind of thing being used for a particular purpose to which we are opposed. And may I say also that when we talked with certain persons, including the Chief Minister of the Madras Government,⁴ they also told us that they realised our difficulty, they appreciated it and they had no desire to function exactly in that way which people feared. So I would commend this particular amendment of Article 15 to the House.

Then I come to Article 19(2) which perhaps has given rise to more comment and controversy than any other suggested amendment. Here may I deal with one matter, because I think two or more honourable Members of the

4. P.S. Kumaraswami Raja.

Select Committee⁵ have protested and raised objections to the fact that they were not supplied with the list of the laws that might be affected by these changes. There are those laws of course, most of them finding a place in the proposed Ninth Schedule.⁶ They are there and they are available to anybody, every one of them and I may inform the House that those were considered carefully by our Law Department. In regard to the other laws I have not quite understood the complaint or, if I may say so, having understood it partly, I have not been quite able to see what I can do about it. It is exceedingly difficult to make a list of all kinds of laws which might be affected. Some I can say straight off. For instance, you can say straight off what effect it will have on a particular law or part of it. I can say that because of a particular judgment of the Supreme Court or the High Court. That is a specific thing. Even there I do not know exactly what the position might be. It is not as if we are suddenly resuscitating or rejuvenating certain laws which had become obsolete, disabled or blocked. It is because of a certain interpretation put by some of our superior courts on a certain fact and we wish by this amendment to change that interpretation. What effect that interpretation will have on any particular law again is to be decided by the superior courts of the land and not by us. I might perhaps give you or perhaps the Law Department might give you an indication of the opinion of eminent lawyers. This might or might not be so. Ultimately it can only be decided by the courts of the land as to what effect this particular amendment when passed has on a particular law. My view will not be a precise and definite opinion but rather an opinion which with my limited knowledge of the law I might give. With regard to some matter I might be more precise and in regard to others I would be vague, because it is not making law out of nothing but making it valid by removing certain obstructions that have come, certain interpretations that had been given which might apply to a part or the whole of the law, as the case may be or might not apply at all to it.

I speak with great respect when I have to deal with the law, because I have not only great respect for the Judges but great fear of the lawyers. Take for instance Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code which deals with what might be called communal discord or the preaching of enmity between communities. I have no doubt that the amendment we are seeking to put in brings back into operation—the exact words might be different—how it should be worked. That is if there is going to be preaching of communal hatred, certainly if this is passed, that can be dealt with.

5. K.T. Shah, Naziruddin Ahmad and Hukam Singh.
6. A Schedule was proposed to be added as the Ninth Schedule to the Constitution, which listed about eleven Acts in all, not brought before Parliament so far which would legalise all those Acts that had been passed in spite of any judicial pronouncements thereon.

Take again Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code. Now so far as I am concerned that particular Section is highly objectionable and obnoxious and it should have no place both for practical and historical reasons, if you like, in any body of laws that we might pass. The sooner we get rid of it the better. We might deal with that matter in other ways, in more limited ways, as every other country does but that particular thing as it is should have no place, because all of us have had enough experience of it in a variety of ways and apart from the logic of the situation, our urges are against it. I do not think myself that these changes that we bring about validate the thing to any large extent. I do not think so, because the whole thing has to be interpreted by a court of law in the fuller context, not only of this matter but other matters as well. Suppose you pass an amendment of the Constitution to a particular Article, surely that particular Article does not put an end to the rest of the Constitution, the spirit, the language, the objective and the rest? It only clarifies an issue in regard to that particular Article.

Therefore, when you consider these amendments and when you pass them into law, all I can say is that the effect of certain judgments will, if this amendment is passed, be removed; the Article will be interpreted in a slightly different way, but always in terms of the whole Constitution. And therefore it becomes difficult for me to place before the House a list of laws and say, "this has happened to them", because it is a question of judgment of each individual. Some might say, "Yes, this has been affected by this particular judgment and this is the effect which we wish to produce." Now these laws—two, three or four—are well-known to the House and to every person who takes an interest in them. For the rest, I just do not know. That was my difficulty.

Insofar as this question of reviving laws, etc., is concerned, it is a question of removing a certain obstruction that had come so that, first of all, we can deal with the situation without that obstruction; secondly, that we can consider the whole matter afresh and put an end to those old laws which are objectionable, and bring something new. The situation became a little difficult for us even to have any new legislation in this matter. The House will remember that there was a Committee known as the Press Laws Enquiry Committee. This Committee made certain recommendations, and it was stated by some Members here and many people outside that these recommendations had been rejected in toto by the Government or by the Home Minister. The fact of the matter was that these recommendations, many of them, were completely pointless if the interpretation of certain courts was correct, as we were bound to accept them to be. Either we could not accept those interpretations—then the question did not arise in that particular way—or we had to proceed in some different way. Supposing you pass this amendment, then their recommendations are something that can be considered as capable of being

effective, if you approve of them. Personally, so far as their recommendations are concerned, in some matters they go rather far, or rather, if I may say so, they do not go far enough. But that is a matter of judgment. The point is the whole issue became a little difficult for us to deal with because of these certain interpretations.

Now as I stated previously, when we brought forward these amendments, any desire to curb or restrain the freedom of the Press, generally speaking, was exceedingly far from our minds. That, of course, is no excuse, or no reason, if in effect the words do that—I realise that—and it is folly for any Government to say, “We did not think of this,” when a certain consequence inevitably flowed from that action. That is perfectly true. Nevertheless, there is something in it when I repeat that any desire to curb the freedom of the Press was not before us. We are dealing with a particular situation, I think a difficult situation, a situation which grows more difficult, for a variety of reasons, national and international. And it was not in terms of curbing the Press but it was rather in wider terms that we thought of this problem. Because we were all the time considering the question of the Press rather independently, we wanted to deal with it independently, to put an end to some old laws and bring something more in conformity with modern practice, in consultation with those people who are concerned with this matter. However it is perfectly true that whether we thought of it or not, this affects the situation to some extent. It affects it in two ways: one, directly, that is to say a certain thing has been done which may put an obstruction in the way of the Press in theory, and, secondly, it may give a chance to a Government to impose some disabilities, that is, the Government may have the legal power to impose some disabilities unless some change is made. Both are possibilities, I recognise that. So far as we are concerned we do not wish, and we do not wish any State Government, to take unfair advantage or any advantage of this change to curb the freedom of the Press, generally speaking, and we wish to review the whole scheme as soon as possible. But I would beg of you to consider this matter in theory as well as, of course, in practice.

Great exception has been taken to some additional phrases in the proposed Article 19(2).⁷ First of all, may I draw your attention to a major change; although the change is of one word only, it is a major change? That is the introduction of the word “reasonable” which makes anything done patently justiciable, although, as a matter of fact, even if that word “reasonable” was not there every part of the Constitution, within some limitations, is always justiciable. It just did not matter if this word “reasonable” was there or not—the matter could have gone to a court of law and could have been interpreted

7. Thakurdas Bhargava and H.V. Kamath had suggested that instead of the word “restrictions” in Article 19(2) the words “reasonable restrictions” should be used.

by our superior courts. There is no doubt about that. It is true that their interpretation would have been limited by the new thing that we have said. That is true, of course, because in interpreting the Constitution they will have to consider the new part of the Constitution that has come in. Nevertheless, the interpretation would have been given taking the Constitution as a whole—the spirit of it, the wording of it, the precise language of it, and so on and so forth. Nothing can take away their power to consider any part of the Constitution and to give their opinion. You can, by Constitutional amendments, direct your attention one way, that the Constitution means this more than the other, and naturally they would interpret it a little that way. But then, whether the word “reasonable” is there or not, surely it is open to a court, if some fantastic thing was done to say it is fantastic. Suppose the word “reasonable” was absent from all those various clauses of Article 19 as it does occur in various clauses, it does not mean that the idea of “reasonable” was absent. It is there although the word may be absent. However, I shall not go into that technical argument. My point is that whatever the power the court might have had if the word “reasonable” had not been there, certainly the introduction of the word “reasonable” gives it the direct authority to consider this matter.

Now why did we not put that word “reasonable” at an early stage? Then we wished to avoid not so much the courts coming into the picture to give their interpretation; but we wished to avoid an excess of litigation about every matter, everything being held up and hundreds, and may be thousands, of references constantly made by odd individuals or odd groups, thereby holding up not only the working of the State but producing a mental confusion in people’s minds at a time when such confusion might do grave injury to the State.

H.V. Kamath: It is a matter of Fundamental Rights.

JN: I am glad my honourable friend interfered. He said that it is a matter of Fundamental Rights. Does he mean that a matter of Fundamental Rights ought to be allowed to lead not only to confusion but to grave danger to the State? Surely not. I say nothing, not a single Fundamental Right can survive grave danger to the State. And I wish the House would be clear about this and realise the times we live in, in this country and in other countries, and not to quote so much some ancient script or ancient text that was said at the time of the French Revolution or the American Revolution. Many things have happened since then. It is an odd thing that some of my honourable friends—not many—have taken umbrage at this amendment in the Constitution and hold up to us that the Constitution is something sacred. Some of them or their colleagues outside this House have openly stated that the first thing they would do if they come to power is to scrap this Constitution and put an end to it. That is a curious position to adopt—that this Constitution has to be scrapped just as

this Parliament has to be scrapped and something new has to come in its place. Here, what we want to do is not to change it, but to amend it slightly. But that is the position only of very few Members of this House.

Some honourable Members who have written their minutes of dissent have referred to the "sacred and sacrosanct" character of this Constitution.⁸ A Constitution must be respected if there is to be any stability in the land. A Constitution must not be made the plaything of some fickle thought or fickle fortune—that is true. At the same time we have in India a strange habit of making gods of various things, adding them to our innumerable pantheon and having given them our theoretical worship doing exactly the reverse. If we want to kill a thing in this country we deify it. That is the habit of this country largely.

So, if you wish to kill this Constitution make it sacred and sacrosanct—certainly. But if you want it to be a dead thing, not a growing thing, a static, unwieldy, unchanging thing, then by all means do so, realising that that is the best way of stabbing it in the front and in the back. Because, whatever the ideas of the 18th century philosophers, or the philosophers of the early 19th century and many of those ideas may be very good, nevertheless the world has changed within a hundred years—changed mightily. The world has changed in the course of your generation and mine tremendously and we have seen great wars and great revolutions. We have seen the most perfect of Constitutions upset, not because they lacked perfection, but because they lacked reality, because they failed to deal with the real problems of the day. Do you know of any better framed, or better phrased Constitution than the Constitution of the Weimar Republic—the German Constitution?⁹ It was perfect in wording, phraseology, balance and adjustment. Yet that whole Constitution went lock, stock and barrel. Away it vanished into the dustbin of history.

Do you know of a better Constitution than the Constitution of the Republic of Spain which unhappily was killed, assassinated about eleven or twelve years ago? It was a magnificent Constitution. It went so far as to say that it would not go to war with any country or make a treaty with any foreign country unless the League of Nations of the day permitted it to do so, or agreed to its doing so. It was a Constitution of fine idealists. Yet these fine idealists are spread over the various corners of the world and that Constitution has no place in Spain.

I have given you two instances; I could give you any number of them from every country of Europe and many countries of Asia. So, do not imagine

8. S.P. Mookerjee said that the onus of proving the need for change had not been "satisfactorily discharged" by the purposes of the amendments. The procedure adopted indicated "how the Constitution is being denied of its inherent sanctity and sacredness."

9. It was adopted on 31 July 1919.

that because we have passed a Constitution and because we call it sacred and sacrosanct, we have necessarily given it stability. Do not also imagine that anything that is considered by you stable is necessarily so. If it is true that a country and a community grow—they are not static—then surely conditions come which should be dealt with in a different way, not in the old way.

Do you wish India to continue as it is? Surely not. You want industrial growth, you want social equality, you want all kinds of things to happen here. You have yourself laid them down in the Directive Principles of Policy. And as I said on the last occasion the real difficulty we have to face is a conflict between the dynamic ideas contained in the Directive Principles of Policy and the static position of certain things, that are called “fundamental”, whether they relate to property or whether they relate to something else. Both are important undoubtedly. How are you to get over them? A Constitution which is unchanging and static, it does not matter how good it is, how perfect it is, is a Constitution that has past its use. It is in its old age already and gradually approaching its death. A Constitution to be living must be growing; must be adaptable; must be flexible; must be changeable. And if there is one thing which the history of political developments has pointed out, I say with great force, it is this that the great strength of the British nation and the British people has lain in their flexible Constitution. They have known how to adapt themselves to changes, to the biggest changes, constitutionally. Sometimes they went through the process of fire and revolution. Even so, they tried to adapt their Constitution and went on with it.

H.V. Kamath: They have no written Constitution.

JN: The honourable Member reminds me of a fact that had not escaped my notice that they have no written Constitution. We in this country could not obviously adopt the British way of an unwritten Constitution. We cannot have that especially in a big country with numerous autonomous provinces and States. Nevertheless the other extreme of a rigid Constitution is a dangerous one, which might lead to the breaking up of that Constitution when it walks away—if you like—at a tangent from reality. Because life is a curve—it is not a straight line—and the life of a nation is even more of a curve, and the life of a nation in the present day of changing humanity is very very curvy. Logical and straight lines are tangents which go off the curve of life and curve of growth of a nation; then there is conflict, an upheaval and after that upheaval, well, something new emerges. You come back, as you are forced to come back to the line of life because you cannot depart too far from it. So if you are flexible in your action and Constitution, then you keep near that curving growth of the nation's life.

We live in a haunted age. I do not know how many honourable Members have that sense and that feeling—we in this country or in the world—of ghosts and apparitions surrounding us, ideas, passions, hatred, violence, preparations for war, many things which you cannot grip, nevertheless which are more dangerous than other things. We live in this haunted age where vast numbers of people in various countries become frustrated because they see no light, because they see danger, the danger of a future war and the danger of a future break-up before them. Honourable Members tell me that this Constitution has been in existence for sixteen months. Can any Member tell me what the fate of the world will be in another sixteen months? I cannot.

H.V. Kamath: Nobody can.

JN: Nobody can accept this that it will be very different from what it is today. And that is a big thing to say. In regard to this country too I venture to say that another sixteen months' time will see many changes, and big changes, in this country. Whether they are for the good or for the bad, I do not know. But it will see many changes. As Mr Gokhale¹⁰ said, how can you enchain the growth of a country? Do you think by some form of words and phrases and calling them a fixed concept it can prevent the growth of a country? So you have to balance. You have to balance between that fickleness of approach which takes these matters light-heartedly—that is dangerous, of course; these are serious matters; we cannot treat them in that fashion—and on the other hand not to lose yourself in rigidity of thought, in unreceptiveness of happenings all round.

These amendments that we have placed before you are an attempt to balance between that stability of approach and at the same time that flexibility, an attempt to balance between the idealism and realism between the conditions in the country as we see them today and the possible dangers that may confront us, and at the same time to keep the whole, entire spirit of the Constitution, the spirit which ensures us freedom, freedom of the Press, and various other freedoms.

Some people have thought that the whole object of these amendments somehow is connected with these elections that are coming. I confess that when I first heard that—it might have been a legitimate inference in those persons' minds—but it came as a great surprise to me, because the idea had not struck me at all. In fact, may I confess it that I do not get excited about these elections at all, either way, any way? I have never been excited about

10. Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915); the leader of the moderates in the Congress and founder of the Servants of India Society, 1905.

elections, and these elections, which are going to be colossal and very big are not likely to excite me. But if the House or the country disbelieves our *bona fides*, then no word of mine of course is helpful. But I can assure the House that none of us, to my knowledge, has the least notion that this had anything to do with the elections as such.

I can tell you one thing, that the fact of elections coming may previously create a situation in the country, a situation dangerous from the point of view of security. Certainly. And if I or anybody who is in a responsible position in the country, responsible for the security of the country, does not think that he can deal with it in a particular way, then it is his duty to come to this House and tell it "We want this particular power to deal with the situation." I am in a responsible position. It is not merely a question of what words you put in the Constitution or not: it is a question of dealing with the situation in the country, of saving the country from going to pieces, as some people want and try to make it. So far as I am concerned, and I am sure so far as the House is concerned, we shall fight to the uttermost all these elements.

Are we going to fight it with these words, to be told that this word comes in the way and that word prevents you from doing this? No word will be allowed to come in the way because the country demands it. How many of you remember, or have you forgotten, three and a half years ago, in this city of Delhi in the month of September 1947, in Punjab, in that entire body of Western Pakistan, what had happened? This Constitution was not there. But I am not thinking of the Constitution. Where was freedom anywhere—not constitutional freedom but the freedom of normal human impulses—where were those freedoms? Do you think your Constitution will prevent me from dealing with such a situation? No. Otherwise the whole Constitution goes, and the country goes. And I want to be perfectly fair to this House and to the country in declaring that, if I am responsible and the Government is responsible, anything that goes towards disrupting the community, anything that goes towards creating communal discord in this country will be met with the heavy hand of this Government. There has been enough of loose talk about this. It is for this country and for this House to have or not to have this Government. But these are the terms of the Government, no other terms.

Now, the Press has said a great deal about the liberty of the Press. I know something of the Press, and I have been connected with the Press too somewhat, and I can understand their apprehensions. Yet I say that what they have said is entirely unfair to this Government. And I say that the Press, if it wants that freedom—which it ought to have—must also have some balance of mind which it seldom possesses. They cannot have it both ways—no balance and freedom.

Every freedom in this world is limited, limited not by law so much, limited by circumstances. We do not wish to come in their way. Personally I

am convinced, as I have said previously, and I believe a pamphlet has been circulated which contains the speech of mine delivered some time back—I am glad that it has been circulated, because I repeat I stand by every word of what I have said about the freedom of the Press—and I hope that insofar as I can I shall be able to help in maintaining that freedom. That is so. But I care a little more for the freedom of India, and I am not going to allow anything coming in the way of the freedom and unity of India, whatever it may be. I do not mean to say that the freedom of the Press comes in the way of the freedom of India. Not that. But we have to look at things in the proper perspective and not lose ourselves as if we are in a court of law, arguing this case or that case. We are legislators sitting in Parliament with the fate of this nation in our hands, possibly also affecting to some extent the fate of other nations. It is a difficult and highly responsible position, and we cannot be moved away by passion or prejudice or by some logical chain of thought which has no relation to reality.

Therefore we have to consider these matters in all seriousness, remembering always that certain freedoms have to be preserved. It is dangerous even in the flush of excitement to weaken them, I admit. We must not weaken them. At the same time, while we want freedom, freedom of the Press or freedom of speech or freedom of anything—they may be good—we have to remember that the nation must be free, the individual must be free and the country must be free. If national freedom is imperilled or individual freedom is imperilled, what good do other freedoms do? Because the basis of freedom is gone. So all these have to be balanced. Maybe the balance we suggest is not a correct balance. Let us look at it. But it is no good saying vaguely that this freedom has been attacked and weakened.

The House will remember—a fact that has been repeatedly stated—that this amendment is an enabling one, it is not a law. If there was a law before the House it should be considered very carefully, each word. Naturally when you give an enabling power, it is given in slightly wider terms. Suppose I say “friendly relations with foreign Governments”, it is a nice, friendly way of putting both from the literary point of view and from the international or national point of view. Exactly, what would amount to a danger to friendly relations is so difficult to state; you cannot specify. You may, of course, put down one thing or the other. You may say “defamatory attacks” as we sought to say at one time “defamatory attacks on the heads of foreign nations or others” but in effect if once you have a check to see that it is not done unreasonably, it is best you use gentle language. During three years or so, and long before the courts gave this clause this interpretation, I am not aware—it may be I am wrong—of any action being taken anywhere in regard to criticism of foreign countries or foreign policy. So far as I am concerned and so long as I have anything to do with it, I can assure you that you can criticize to

your heart's limit and extent the foreign policy that my Government pursues or the policy of any country; to the utmost limit you can go. I cannot dislike your criticism; nobody will be allowed to come in your way. But suppose you do something which seems to us to incite war, do you think we ought to remain quiet and await the war to come? And if it is so, I am sure no country would do that. We cannot imperil the safety of the whole nation in the name of some fancied freedom which puts an end to all freedom. Therefore, it is not a question of stopping the freedom of criticism of any country and naturally we should like not to indulge in what might be called defamatory attacks against leading foreign personalities. That is never good, but in regard to any policy you can criticize it to the utmost limit that you like, either our policy or any country's policy, but always thinking in terms of this, that we are living in a very delicate state of affairs in this world, when words, whether oral or written count; they make a difference for the good or for the bad. A bad word said out of place may create a grave situation, as it often does. In fact, it would be a good thing, I think, if many statesmen, most of them are all dealing with foreign affairs, became quiet for a few months; it would be a still better thing if newspapers became quiet for a few months. It would be best of all if all were quiet for a few months. However, these are pious aspirations which I fear will not be accepted or acted up to; but we live in dangerous times and I wish the House to consider them in dealing with this Article 19(2). In the Select Committee we examined it in a variety of ways. You will remember that the word "reasonable" was not there at first. We tried to redraft it completely, more on the lines of the present shape of words in Article 19(2) of the Constitution. In the present form of words, there is no mention of "restrictions." So we thought that we had better proceed on that line and then we tried naturally to limit the various subjects mentioned there, for instance—I should be quite frank with you—in regard to friendly relations with foreign powers, we sought to put in the words "defamatory attacks on heads of foreign States" plus such other attacks which might impair the friendly relations with foreign States. Now that is obviously limited and that is all that one wants and so we went on limiting the other subjects. We produced a new draft at that time. Then we looked at it and we found that while some people liked this part of the draft better, the other people liked that, but nobody seemed to like the whole thing as it was and so we thought: Let us go back to our old draft but with a very major change, that is, the addition of the word "reasonable" which really, immediately, and explicitly limits everything that you do and puts it for the courts to determine whether it is reasonable or not. It is a big addition. As I said, it is not the courts we are afraid of. There are courts of eminent judges, but what really frightens me a little is the tremendous volume and bulk of litigation that all this kind of thing encourages and thereby bringing in complete uncertainty in everything.

There is one thing else. My colleague Shrimati Durgabai¹¹ has put in a note in which she has argued that these changes should be made by Parliament and not by the States. I am 100 per cent in sympathy with her desire. My sympathies are there but my mind is not quite clear about the legal aspects of this. I think it would be a very good thing if Parliament alone can go into these matters, but I am assured by some lawyers that there are difficulties in the way. Then again another Member of the Select Committee¹² has suggested that the President may certify any such Bills connected with these matters passed by the State Legislatures. That is a matter which we may consider. These are not matters of basic principles because we want two things: a certain power to deal with a certain critical situation if and when it arises; and checks to see that that power may not be misused. We want both these things. It is impossible to do these things perfectly; you have to find some middle way and trust to luck that the people who exercise that power will be sensible, reasonable and wise. As a matter of fact, Governments, whether Central or State Governments, today have naturally a great deal of power. If they misuse it they can do a lot of mischief in a hundred and other ways. Ultimately the check consists in that Government falling out. The only check is that we have to choose the right persons who are likely to behave in a reasonable and wise way.

I need not draw your attention to the fact that not only the word "reasonable" has gone into Article 19 but two or three lines of words have gone in, which I think improve the Article greatly and make it more concise and bring the whole scope of the Article under the word "reasonable."

Then I come to Article 21. Here some minor changes have been made. I need not go far into it, but there is one thing which I should like to say particularly. Some honourable Members, I believe, have given notice of amendments to add other laws to the Ninth Schedule. I would beg of them not to press this matter. It is not with any great satisfaction or pleasure that we have produced this long Schedule. We do not wish to add to it for two reasons. One is that the Schedule consists of a particular type of legislation, generally speaking, and another type should not come in. Secondly, every single measure included in this Schedule was carefully considered by our President and certified by him, every one, except the last one, I think, and that last one was independently examined by us quite a great deal. So that, it has gone through a process of examination, analysis and scrutiny and we can

11. G. Durgabai; a prominent worker in the cause of women's welfare and associated with several social welfare organisations.

12. Hussain Imam.

take a certain responsibility about it. If you go on adding at the last moment, it is not fair, I think, or just to this Parliament or to the country.

This Article 31 refers chiefly and principally to the abolition of the zamindari system and the like, which has been a basic programme of the country for a long time. I am not speaking at the moment from any partisan or party point of view, although that is important enough in the sense that if we are pledged to something we should give effect to it, but rather from larger considerations. I would beg the House to consider that the basic problem today in Asia is the agrarian problem. If we delay in giving effect to it, as we have delayed, we will get entangled in all manner of difficulties out of which we might not be able to extricate ourselves, quite apart from its intimate relationship with the food problem.

I should like to say that in this matter there has been a fair amount of litigation. In fact, it is due to that litigation that some of these difficulties have arisen. I cannot blame the people for going to law courts to get such protection as they think they could get. I am not blaming the zamindars for doing so. They have every right to do so and profit by it. But I would like to put it to them and to others that their security ultimately lies in a stable economic system and not in the law courts, nor in anything else. If there is lack of peace between the vast agrarian population and them, then, they have no security. That system cannot continue; it just does not matter what your Fundamental Rights might say, what your Constitution might say or what your courts might say. Then, you arrive at a revolutionary situation which ignores all these things. Therefore, that is not the right way. We have to consider the reality and readjust, put an end to the big zamindari system, reform our land system, make it progressive and modernise it, at the same time keeping the old ways also, not uprooting the ways of the community.

Now, that balance has to be created. In creating that balance, repeated attempts to go to the law courts and check the various things will not help. For my part, I would advise on the one side, if I may say so, the State Governments concerned—if this amendment is passed—they have a certain power to go ahead with the laws that they have already passed that they should exercise that power with restraint and wisdom, and that they should examine any hard cases that come to them. We shall help them in examining them and dealing with them. They should, if necessary, amend their laws, here and there so as to deal with these hard cases, because nobody wants injustice or hardships. But the fact remains that when you change the social system, when you change the agrarian system, the burden must fall on somebody. You cannot distribute your resources equally to all; if they are distributed unequally, the same thing happens and you start the other operation. Therefore, I would like the State Governments to look upon it from that point of view. I should like the representatives of the zamindars also to look upon

it from the point of view of not trying to get something from a long litigation. They will not, I can assure them. They may gain a point here or there. The only parties who profit will be the lawyers.

K. Hanumanthaiya:¹³ May I say that it is the judicial system that is responsible and not any individual member of the system?

JN: I know that; I am not blaming anybody; it is always the system that is responsible, or lack of system, sometimes.

I beg to place this report of the Select Committee before the House for their favourable consideration. I can assure them that anything that is said here, we should listen to with respect and attention. I need hardly say that during the last two or three weeks since we have been considering this matter, we have given an enormous amount of thought and energy to it in a concentrated way. Although it has been here only for three weeks or so, we have perhaps compressed the work of months into it. What we have put forward has been carefully thought out and discussed. Naturally, if any valid reason appears to us to change a word or a phrase here or there, we shall gladly consider that. What is put forward is not lightly put forward.

13. Later Chief Minister, Mysore.

13. To B.N. Rau¹

New Delhi
May 29, 1951

My dear B.N.,²

Thank you for your letter of May 22nd.³

We are still in the middle of the Constitution Amendment Bill. The Indian Press has made a tremendous fuss over it.⁴ I confess all this has come to me as a great surprise.

1. B.N. Rau Papers, NMML.
2. He was India's permanent representative at the United Nations at this time.
3. Rau informed Nehru that the constitutional amendment relating to freedom of speech and expression had created a furore and that he had prepared a letter to the Press regarding it.
4. In a statement on 22 May, the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference claimed that the proposed amendment to Article 19(2) curtailing the liberties of the Press was "unwarranted and uncalled for."

The first object of the Bill was to get over the difficulties created by the zamindari legislation, some of which had been declared *ultra vires* by High Courts. A very grave agrarian situation was developing and we just could not afford to take any chances. The second object was to remove some doubts created by certain judgments in regard to Article 19(2), Freedom of Speech and Expression. Being enabling clauses, they were somewhat widely worded. Now the word "reasonable" has been introduced before "restrictions". This brings it within the scope of the law completely. Much of the criticism has disappeared, but the organised Press is still rather bitter. What they are really afraid of is not Parliament but some of the State Assemblies. We would gladly limit this law-making power in such matters to Parliament, but this interferes with the Lists and we are advised that we cannot touch these Lists by amendment in the normal way.

We have made it perfectly clear that we are going to put an end, as soon as possible, to all the old and rather obsolete laws in regard to the Press or sedition, etc. We hope to bring, during the next session of Parliament, a measure doing this and having some further positive provisions. As for foreign relations, we have no intention of passing any law at present. There is an old Foreign Relations Act or something of the early thirties, which is completely inapplicable today and we shall put an end to it.

As a matter of fact, these "foreign relations" was put in for good form and not because there was any positive need for it. As we were amending the Constitution, we thought we might as well remove this subject from doubt.

What we are really concerned with is not what is normally called sedition, but communal disorder or something in the nature of Section 153-A. This had been put an end to by legal decisions and we want to have that power, as the communal situation continues to be bad. There is every danger of this situation deteriorating still further, especially in the Punjab.

I think that it would be a good thing if you wrote to the Press in the US on this subject. Some relevant papers are being sent to you separately by Mathai. Any article by you will carry weight.

I hope you enjoyed your stay in California.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. Restraint on Newspapers¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: I confess that the last speech of the honourable Mr Anthony has somewhat diverted me from my normal line of thought.² It was not my intention in these closing remarks of mine to say much, because, I think almost every aspect of this matter has been very fully discussed and anything that I could say would be more or less a repetition. I did not wish to trouble the House any more by any lengthy speech. All I wished to say was to explain one or two simple matters. But Mr Anthony has discussed wide and grave problems.³ I do not wish to go into them and I do not believe that it will be good for this country if any individual or any small group has any blanket powers given to it. A grave emergency, if it arises, naturally has to be met by grave measures. If a grave emergency arises in this country, then Parliament will have to meet it and decide how to meet it, even according to the Constitution, as the Constitution provides very special measures.

For the moment, we are not thinking in terms of such grave emergencies although we cannot completely put them out of our minds because we do live, if I may repeat a trite phrase, in strange and moving times and no man can say when that grave emergency may come. In a great country, famous for its history of freedom, France, developments are taking place which might in the next few weeks mean very great, basic constitutional changes:⁴ no man knows. France is today facing in some ways a greater constitutional crisis than at any time since this republic came into existence in the seventies of the last century. France is a great liberty-loving, highly cultured, stable country.

1. Intervention in Parliament, 31 May 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol XII & XIII, Part II, columns 9790-9801.
2. Frank Anthony, the leader of the Anglo-Indian community, said if Nehru could bring in an amendment so as to bring the blanket powers (of the State Legislatures) within the exclusive legislative control of Parliament, he would support it and if there were some insuperable constitutional difficulties against that, he would plead with him (Nehru) at least to reserve State legislation for the certification of the President.
3. Anthony was not in favour of giving blanket powers to the State Legislatures. He thought if the State Legislatures were given blanket powers, they would be misused, as some (State Legislatures) would bring in oppressive *malafide* legislation to disable political rivals, crush and silence all opposition and the Press.
4. The Electoral Reform Bill, which had been the subject of Parliamentary debate since December 1950, and had led to disagreements within the Coalition parties which caused the resignation of Pleven's Government on 28 February 1951, was finally passed by the French National Assembly on 7 May 1951 after one of the most protracted controversies in French Parliamentary history and after the opposition of the Council of the Republic, which had tried to substitute a different measure, had been overruled. On the basis of this reform, general elections took place in France on 17 June 1951.

So, if any of us imagines that we are safe from having to face these grave emergencies, then we are mistaken.

But, let us forget it except to keep it at the back of our minds, except to prevent ourselves from becoming complacent and static in outlook and talking only of the petty troubles of the day or thinking only of the elections that are to come. I attach importance to these elections obviously because Parliament and provincial Assemblies emerging from these elections will naturally play a highly important part in the future of India for the next few years. But I do not attach importance to these elections so much as to forget that they are only a small part of this big moving scene of India in the world.

Coming to the particular amendments that are proposed, various criticisms and attacks have been made upon them. In the main, the attacks are concentrated upon clause 3 of Article 19(2), and in the main that attack has also been on the part of the Press or some of those who represent the Press here or outside. When we said that this is an enabling measure, and that we were not passing any actual law, that was criticized partly rightly and partly, if I may say so, not rightly. Of course, even an enabling measure has to be looked into and scrutinised to see that not too wide and unlimited powers are given so far as Fundamental Rights are concerned. At the same time, you cannot, in the very nature of things, limit that enabling measure very greatly. I should like to give an example. There is this question of incitement to an offence which is very wide and which may mean anything and everything.⁵ Some people say, make it incitement to violent offence.⁶ My honourable colleague, the Home Minister, has dealt with this matter, how violence, if I may say so, is sometimes infinitely preferable to many other things which are not violent.⁷ There are many other things which degrade humanity, degrade the community and degrade the individual and do more serious harm without indulging in any physical violence. How are you going to limit this? It is very difficult. Again, suppose you describe actually the serious offences. Immediately, you inferentially arrive at the conclusion that the newspapers or people speaking in public can incite for everything except what is mentioned actually in the Constitution. That is a ridiculous position. Therefore, it becomes

5. S.P. Mookerjee said on 30 May 1951 that only one judgment had been delivered which might be construed as having done something which necessitated a change in the Constitution as proposed.
6. K.T. Shah, S.P. Mookerjee and Thakur Das Bhargava.
7. On 31 May 1951, Rajagopalachari said, "If Parliament gravely sits down to pass a law that people should not sell wheat or gram at above a certain price, if honourable Members make a law that people should not commit theft, if honourable Members make a law in any other matter which does not involve violence, is it to be conceived that the freedom of speech granted by the Constitution should go to the extent of encouraging or inciting people to commit those very crimes which we have defined after deliberation and put into the Statute Book?"

difficult to limit these things. Ultimately, you have to rely on Parliament and if you like, the judiciary.

Now, as this clause is amended, Parliament of course comes into the picture; the judiciary also comes in. So that, if you do not trust them now, it means that you neither trust Parliament nor the judiciary, nor the two put together. What then are we going to trust? Whom do we trust? In our fear to trust this or that, we try to disable ourselves and put ourselves in a position when we may not be able to meet a particular contingency when needed.

According to our thinking, we cannot meet wholly the present contingency. Let me be frank with you, we do not want every single thing that has been put down in this amendment. For my part, speaking as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I want no law from you for the present moment restricting in the slightest degree criticism of foreign countries or their policies. But I do not know how and when an occasion may arise when the actual possibility of our relations being disturbed so much as to threaten war or something like that may arise, when we may have to be a little more careful. But for my part I do not want any law and I am not coming to you so far as I can envisage, for any law flowing from the words "friendly relations with foreign States." But I have put that in because even though we do not want it now, it is something which may be necessary in the scheme of things in the world and we cannot come to the House repeatedly to amend the Constitution. When we are doing it now it is as well that we put it in although it may not be necessary now. We have come to the House with this Bill because in other matters urgent amendments were required, and also to be frank, as far as this particular matter goes, it might be necessary for the future. We have to trust Parliament in certain things and we have to trust the judiciary, and ultimately you have to trust yourself and the people. There is no other way. If our people or if we as Parliament do not function as we ought to, or go to pieces—if I may use a colloquialism—then no amount of constitution will save us, no provision or anything.

Mr Anthony pleaded for Parliament to deal with this and not so much the State Assemblies. Now for my part, I think there is a great deal in that argument, and I would have gladly accepted that change or alteration in this clause, but for certain difficulties that arise. I would have accepted it not so much because I distrust the State Assemblies, but rather because I feel that in matters of this kind there should be some uniformity and not variety. When I say that I do not distrust the State Assemblies I do not mean to say that I trust them entirely. I think it is possible for a State Assembly sometimes, to go beyond the mark. It is quite possible to do something which you and I might not approve of. But it is in the very nature of democracy that we should take that risk. And if you do not take that risk and try to stop them or impose yourself on them then things begin to go wrong at the bottom and it

does not help you much except for a little while. Nevertheless I would have liked the word "Parliament" here instead of the word "State" in clause (2). But after a great deal of consideration and enquiry we are told by those who ought to know and those who dabble in these high legal matters, that this is not possible, without upsetting the whole scheme of things, because it means interfering with the powers of the States as laid down in the Constitution. What the interpretation of judicial courts might be later on if we changed it this way I do not know, but there is grave fear that it might be challenged and challenged with success, and when such advice is given to us, we cannot possibly take the risk of changing the word there.

Then Mr Anthony said if that is not possible then as an alternative we might have some clause about having the President's assent to such laws as may come under clause 19(2). In fact, I think there is in Article 31A some such clause. For our part, we are completely agreeable to that, largely for the sake of uniformity and for knowing what is happening and for keeping together. We have always to consider this question of the cohesiveness of India, apart from other things. Each State or province should not walk along its own path farther and farther away from the others. So this is desirable and so far as we are concerned, if the House so wishes, we are perfectly agreeable to have that. But apart from this, whether you have that or not, please remember that any matter coming under this, comes in the Concurrent legislation of Parliament and the States. Now, it has become a convention—I cannot immediately say whether it is anything more and whether it is in the Constitution itself—that anything coming under the Concurrent List of legislation, any law passed by a State Assembly, has to come up here for examination and for the President's approval.⁸ Is that so?

An honourable Member: Not until this House passes a law.

JN: What I meant was, if there is obvious repugnance then, of course, it does not come into effect. That is obvious. But in order to examine that there is no repugnance, in order to see that it is what the legislative lists contemplate, it comes up here for the President's assent. Therefore, in effect....

L. Krishnaswami Bharati⁹: Not necessarily.

JN: I do not say it is necessary, in the sense that the law does not take effect. But I am told that it is practically automatic and anyhow it has been in

8. On 30 May 1951, Mookerjee said that it would be "a very important change if it was provided that only Parliament would pass laws under this clause. At least laws framed by State Legislatures under this provision should be subject to the assent of the President."

9. A Congressman from Tamil Nadu.

practice automatic. And such laws have to come up here, every one of them, for they come up daily, first of all to the Home Ministry to examine and to the Law Ministry also to examine and it comes before the President to see whether he expresses his approval or not. So it can be taken for granted that, especially in a matter of this kind it must inevitably come. I go beyond that and if the House wishes I am perfectly willing to add a clause about the President's assent to Article 19. It is for the House to decide.

Now, of course, we have not arrived at the stage of amendments, but I have seen a large number of amendments of which honourable Members have given notice. I think after all this discussion and after all the careful scrutiny in the Select Committee, we do not feel that any amendment would improve the wording. It may be that there might be one or two verbal amendments put forward by Government itself. But that will not change the real meaning of the Article.

One thing has been mentioned, and I might mention it now too, that there is a certain slight doubt or confusion about the description or definition of the word "estate" more particularly in regard to jagirs and the like. We think it would be desirable to clear that up and mention them, if necessary, by name or otherwise, so that there might be no doubt left about it.

I must confess that with all my, if I may say so, instinctive sympathy for the Press and for the reaction of the Press, I do feel that the honourable Members who have spoken on behalf of the Press have rather overreached themselves, have overshot the mark. We have been told that this Government is riding roughshod over the entire Press. I put it to this House, is that correct?

Several Members: No, no.

JN: It amazed me. Therefore I say vague language, after all, comes out of vague thought or the lack of thought. People get lost in the phrases they use and do not connect them with any consistent or logical thought. The result is many phrases are hurled at us about curbing the freedom of the Press, riding roughshod and all that, and I have been totally unable to connect them with any reality in this amendment or elsewhere. It is true that by bringing forward this amendment, Parliament is given certain powers to deal with certain matters affecting the Press. Therefore, there is a certain risk involved in the minds of journalists, pressmen and the like that Parliament may exercise them to their disadvantage. I recognize that. I recognize that it is legitimate for them to try to check or limit this or to try to prevent this power being exercised to their disadvantage. Apart from the high-sounding phrases like the freedom and liberty of the Press which are important in the sense that they represent important ideas, in the ultimate analysis we come across, in every phase of social activity, vested interests. Now, vested interests may be good or bad. One can easily

understand a vested interest trying to protect itself and they are justified in doing that. Today the whole question of the Press which we have—sometimes on a high level and sometimes on lower levels—is something entirely different, completely different, from what it was when these great judgments which often are quoted, are placed before us, were given or when those arguments took place in the nineteenth century in regard to the freedom of the Press. Generally speaking, the idea of freedom of the Press is admitted. It was not admitted in the authoritarian countries, whether they were on the one side, the communist side, or the fascist side. They deliberately do not allow it. There the matter ends. There is no argument. So far as other countries are concerned, they accept it or admit it. Admitting it, they come up against certain inevitable restrictions, whether they are unwritten in the common law or written or judicial as the case may be, but meanwhile strange things have been happening and the Press today is something entirely and absolutely different from what it was—let us say—fifty years ago. It has no relation to it. The great newspapers of the world are mighty organs representing an enormous financial strength behind them. I am not referring to the Indian papers—none of them is quite so big though they hope to become big. No person today can start a daily newspaper, say in England or America unless he is a multi-millionaire. Therefore there is the freedom of the Press so far as big newspapers are concerned. You cannot take economic advantage of it—you may do it by issuing a small weekly paper or something like that in a limited sphere—but you can never compete with those great national organs with vast circulations and money power behind them because no man and no group of persons without that great money power can start a newspaper today in those countries. The position is not quite the same in India but it goes in that direction and it is bound to go in the nature of things.

There is another thing. We talk about freedom of the Press and freedom of opinion. Now strangely enough there is a new development of our mechanical civilization. I am not talking about fascism and communism because they are based upon regimentation deliberately. I am talking of democratic countries which have constitutional freedom guaranteed in the Constitution or otherwise. In those States the whole nature of the development of their mechanical civilization is such that the mind of the people becomes mechanized and regimented and you find, therefore, great countries moved by mass hysteria because the newspapers help them or for other reasons and the poor non-conformist is as badly off as if he had no fundamental rights or freedom of the Press or anything. There are these great tendencies. I am merely pointing it out to the House because the problem becomes more and more difficult, more and more intricate and complicated. Ultimately this problem, as any other problem, depends upon the quality of the human beings and of the community at large. If in India the quality is good, it is well with us. If it is

not, then it is not well with us whatever constitutional guarantee we might have or not have.

Take again the Press. What is the Press? There is the enormous variety from the well-known great daily newspapers or weekly newspapers to enormous number of news-sheets and the like. I mentioned, in one of my speeches in this House in regard to this Bill, my deep distress at certain tendencies in what I suppose is called the Press of India because there are some news-sheets, views-sheets and the other kinds of sheets. The other day I was looking through a large number of cuttings from the Urdu and Hindi Press. I cannot tell you how thoroughly ashamed I felt. I blushed with shame to read that such things should be printed day after day, cartoons and letters and the rest. I could not imagine anything more disgusting and obscene and vile. I am not talking about political criticism. People seem to think that we are dealing with political opposition. So far as I am concerned, and so far as I have any say in the matter, there should be no curb to the most extreme political criticism of any country—foreign or of any party in India. But there is something else—not political at all, although it affects politics because it degrades politics, because it affects all our public life by degrading it and that is this new tendency in not a very small number but a very large number. Mr Deshbandhu Gupta said it was a small minority. I say it is a very large number. Small sheets come out—it is easy to print them—that does not require much capital even. I saw them. Hindi and Urdu are languages with which I am partially acquainted—I cannot speak for other languages in the country. In English too I have sometimes seen the same but I take it that there is no great difference and I was astounded to see the extreme descent into obscenity and vulgarity applied to politics. It is bad enough without it and I wonder if this thing went on, what the poor villager or townsman or anybody or our soldier who reads them would feel about it. His morale will go down and his standard will go down. What do we do and what can we do about it? You can tell me, “Why do you not take action against it because it contains defamation?” One can and should do that but it is not so very easy. Do you expect me to go and put in some kind of a petition or start a suit for defamation against every petty paper and waste my time and energy and give the wretched paper publicity and all that—the Prime Minister going into a court of law? So we ignore them and yet there is this danger of ignoring them. Because they go on step by step and get worse and worse. It astonishes me. So then, what is the Press? Let us agree to it completely that every type of political criticism, as extreme as possible, must have the most absolute freedom in opposition anywhere, wherever it may be, but are we going to agree to obscenity having freedom or this kind of utterly degraded criticism bringing in the personal life of individuals and so on? Obviously not—nobody will say “yes”. These two things get mixed up completely.

As I said on an earlier occasion, we did not think of the Press specially when we brought this amendment. I am mentioning these matters to you not really in connection with this Bill but because there has been so much talk of the Press. Therefore I am referring to it. I would invite the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference to appoint—and I am prepared to appoint a Committee or a Commission myself on behalf of Government and I am prepared to put in persons chosen by the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference—to examine the state of the Press today in India. Let them examine the state and the content of the Indian Press today and report to us.

My honourable colleague made another suggestion, which I forget for the moment. (Honourable Members: Trial by jury). Yes, trial by jury. I can understand our newspapers themselves assisted by one or two others examining the state and the content of the Press, meaning thereby all types of Press—big, small and middling—and reporting to us what they consider to be right or wrong in it. I shall be prepared to accept their judgment in this matter.

Therefore, it is not a question of putting any curb on the Press, because a curb on the Press presumably is and is meant to be on the political aspects of this question.

Some people, I think it was Mr Anthony, who mentioned something about the general elections. Mr Anthony is a seasoned campaigner, I suppose. Does not Mr Anthony realise that the most effective way to lose an election is the use of those powers by any Government or any Minister or any person connected with the Government? If any Government or any person connected with the Government uses governmental powers against his opponent too much—he may perhaps do so in secret a little—the public reaction against that would be so great as to injure him infinitely more than any help he can get thereby. That is inevitable: we have known that all the time. Even in the days of British rule it was so. In this matter there is no half-way house, because constituted as we are as a democratic society and democratic Government—we may misbehave, some district magistrate or provincial Government may misbehave here or there—either way you have either to go full steam towards repression or coercion of your opponents. Or if you remain in the middle then you fall between two stools. Either you adopt the full democratic process completely taking all the risks and dangers involved in it, hoping that ultimately truth will survive, or you adopt the normal autocratic process of coercion, coercing your opponent or those whom you do not like or who go against you, which normally a foreign Government does. Even they cannot go beyond a certain limit. I can understand either of these courses. You cannot have extremes and to some extent a middle course has to be followed. In any attempt really to mix the two you perhaps lose the benefit of either and you fall between two stools. It is obvious that whatever sins the Central or provincial Governments may suffer from or indulge in it is not

possible, in the nature of things, for them to function as complete autocrats. They just cannot do it. Howsoever evil their intention may be, in the very nature of things they cannot go far in that direction without creating a great deal of trouble for themselves. So you have to rule out that extreme step. If they do adopt it, red revolution may follow. So that I would like you to consider that all this talk of Government curbing the Press is, normally speaking, physically impossible, for a Government cannot go far in that direction, even if they wanted to. Government can go far if it can adduce adequate reasons for going far and if they can satisfy Parliament and the judiciary. If conditions become very bad, whether in relation to the Press or the public order that Government has to adopt some extreme measures and Parliament and the judiciary approve of it, then there it is. But if the people disapprove of it completely then the people will show the way either normally in an election or abnormally in other ways by riots and the like. This is how democratic Governments function. They have to take the middle path somewhat. Now these amendments are an attempt at keeping alive that democratic process and yet slightly taking the middle path so as to avoid danger to that very democratic process. Because if you do not allow yourself that flexibility it is possible that the democratic process itself may be uprooted and the very freedoms that we are so anxious to preserve may themselves fade away before some other attack.

Therefore, I beg the House to consider these amendments from this wider point of view and to accept them. If the House thinks that there is some *malafide* intention on the part of Government which they have not disclosed, well, then I have nothing further to say and my words cannot carry any weight. But if they trust, if they think that the words mean just what they say and nothing more, and that we felt that in the existing situation in the country some such power should vest in Parliament, or, if you like, some such power which we had thought had vested in Parliament but which had been doubted by judicial decisions should be clarified, whichever way you look at it, we thought this necessary and we have brought this up before Parliament for it to put a seal on it, relying on the wisdom of Parliament in future to use this right properly, rightly and widely, then I see no difficulty in the way of anyone, whether he represents the Press here or any other cause, to be at all anxious or worried about it. Parliament, I take it, represents and will represent in future the general sense of the community in India, that is of the great majority of the Indian population. It will be an unfortunate thing if the Press comes into some kind of conflict with the public—it is not a contingency that can be ruled out. It is a very strange thing and you may have noticed it in the highly developed countries like the United Kingdom and the United States of America with powerful organs of public opinion, that although the Press may say one thing, yet some election takes place and it is completely contrary to the opinion

of the Press. It is happening there in spite of the great power of the Press there and, generally speaking, the high standard of the Press there, because a hiatus is developing between what is called public opinion and the Press which is presumed to represent that public opinion. Now if that kind of thing happens here it would be unfortunate, it would be undesirable. Even the Press cannot live in an ivory tower of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference. It has to come down; it has to come down first of all to the ordinary journalist and the sub-editor and the editor and all that. It has to come down, next, to the compositor, the pressman and the other people. And finally it has to come down to the man in the street, in the field, and in the factory.

These are odd considerations which I have put before the House and, personally, I do feel that this debate has clarified the atmosphere greatly—if I may say so with all respect, clarified the atmosphere completely in favour of this amending Bill that I have moved.

15. Special Provision for Backward Classes¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: This particular clause² has been considered and debated at various stages of this measure, so that I do not think I can say anything more or throw any further light on it. There are only two or three points which I might mention. The first point on which stress has been laid by some honourable Members and colleagues is about this question of Parliament dealing with this matter and not the State Legislatures.³ Well, my colleague, the Law Minister, has dealt with this matter at length. I will put it even lower than he has done and say that if there is any doubt about the matter, even so we should not do something which involves that doubt. It is not the principle I am against, as I said previously, but rather the fact that we might do something which might be considered doubtful or which might be challenged as not right in terms of the Constitution. I do not think it will be right for us to take such a step

1. 1 June 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol XII & XIII, Part II, columns 9872-9876, 9915-9922.
2. Clause 3 of the Bill relating to Article 19. The clause empowered imposition of "reasonable" restrictions on the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed in Article 19(2).
3. S.P. Mookerjee requested Nehru to consider the main purpose of his two amendments with regard to the substitution of the word "Parliament" in the place of State or if that was not possible, at least to provide that the laws passed by the States in that behalf would be subject to the President's assent.

which may create an unpleasant situation, at any rate, in certain circumstances. We decided, so far as I am concerned, against my will, if I may say so, not to have this word "Parliament" there instead of "State"; and as regards the President's assent the difficulty was not so great and Dr Ambedkar has dealt with that matter fairly thoroughly.⁴ In effect, as he pointed out, all such matters which deal with Concurrent legislation, and I think all such matters as are concerned, we shall see to it, insofar as friendly and executive direction goes, that they do come here, to avoid any conflict of laws or any lack of uniformity or anything being done in a hurry. We certainly intend taking that step and I am quite sure that all State Governments would readily agree to it.

Then this clause has been chiefly dealt with in regard to the freedom of the Press. For my part, I am exceedingly glad that these debates have taken place on this subject which I consider of the highest importance; not only that, but from a relatively limited point of view, which has been expressed by some of the representatives of the Press here, and even wider point of view because the Press is bound to continue to be a very important organ of public life and it is right that we should understand it in all its implications. We should give it not only freedom but understand how that freedom is exercised. I suggested yesterday that it might be desirable for the side of the Press to be examined by representatives of the Press as well as others.⁵ And thinking about it this idea developed in my mind and I think it might well be desirable, and now I am referring not to the immediate issue about what is sought to put restraints on the Press,⁶ which as I said, we have no intention of bringing about, but the larger issue of the Press, and something, some kind of enquiry such as takes place in England by a Royal Commission there which might be productive of good for the Press and good generally for the development of this very important aspect in public affairs. That is something which deserves the consideration of this House and the Government will also consider it from this larger point of view. So I shall not say anything more about the Press except again to say that these various references to foreign affairs, I confess, have seemed to me to be very much beside the point. It is perfectly true that

4. Ambedkar had mentioned: "... Under Article 200 of the Constitution the Governors or the Rajpramukhs of the different States are empowered to withhold their assent from any particular Bill and refer it to the President... There is another Article 254 which deals with the laws in the Concurrent field and that Article says that if there is any inconsistency between any law made by the Parliament and a similar law on the same subject made by a State Legislature, then to the extent of the repugnancy and inconsistency the law of the State shall be void..." and if the President gave his assent then that law would remain valid so far as that State was concerned.
5. See the preceding item.
6. S.P. Mookerjee pointed out that there should be no ban on public criticism and restrictions should come when there was any clear danger of public disorder and a menace to the security of the State.

the phrase we have put in—friendly relations—is a wide phrase. We put it in because we thought it might serve our purpose and any other phrase it seemed to us not quite proper, in the sense that it was far better to talk about friendly relations here, and lay stress on a positive aspect of policy rather than the negative aspect of it and we shall stop that and so on and so forth. I can assure the House that in regard to foreign affairs there has been and there is going to be, so far as I am concerned, not the slightest interference with any expression of opinion or criticism of our internal policy or external policy or the policy of any other foreign power. Dr Mookerjee referred to a recent issue of a weekly which apparently is published in Delhi.⁷ I saw that too, I think, yesterday and I was greatly surprised to read it because many of the facts contained in it were completely new to me. In fact they were no facts at all. I shall briefly refer to that. I shall read what it says:

The Press Trust of India, losing their nerve at an Indian journalist's daring to paint a picture different from that officially prescribed by Mr Nehru, referred the message, before releasing it, to the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee of the Cabinet. Mr Nehru and Mr N.G. Ayyangar, it is believed, favoured suppressing it; Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mr Rajagopalachari considered that it should not be concealed from the Indian public and the world's Press. The dissenting views were conveyed to the Press Trust of India, who decided on suppression. Reuters abided by this suppression and a message sent by an Indian journalist to the Indian public was released for publication only in Australia.

This apparently presumes that there is intimate contact between the Press Trust of India and the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee of the Cabinet and that the Press Trust of India refers matters to the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee of the Cabinet. So far as I am concerned, this particular message, I have read for the first time in this issue of this periodical. I have never seen it previously. I had heard of it but I had not seen it. Of course, we had had nothing to do with this or any other message. I never heard of it. So far as I know my colleague the Home Minister never heard of it. I am quite certain that Sardar Patel knew nothing about it and so far as any consultation with Mr Gopalaswami Ayyangar is concerned, it has never taken place. The whole thing is a tissue

7. S.P. Mookerjee referred to a press message, published in a Delhi journal of 1 June, which related to a message of November 1950, sent by Shiva Ram of Press Trust of India, who lived in China, describing the conditions in China and criticising in many places the way in which the communist Government was conducting itself and how its activities might not only threaten the peace of Korea but might also affect world peace. It was alleged that since that was not complimentary to the Chinese Government, at the instance of the Prime Minister or of the Cabinet Committee or of somebody in authority, that particular message was not allowed to be published.

of untruths but what happened not in regard to this message but generally about this matter, I shall place before the House. In regard to this message I enquired today. What happened was this: A representative of the PTI went over some time to our Foreign Office and consulted the Secretary-General there about it. The Secretary-General sent a note to me. I shall use his own words: it is absurd to talk of censorship.

On receipt of this message Mr so and so of the PTI saw me and sought my advice as to whether publication of it would be helpful. I told him that I did not think it would and he went away. It was for him to decide to publish it or not. Then so and so advised his General Manager accordingly and so on. He decided not to publish it. Then I know nothing about it nor any Member of the Cabinet or of the Government.

Normally, and it is quite natural everywhere I suppose, every Foreign Office tries to keep in friendly contact with the Press to give them information and not to get information from them or stop it. In fact at the instance of Mr Deshbandhu Gupta some kind of liaison committee with the Foreign Office was instituted by the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference.⁸ I welcome that and sometimes we meet together and we discuss matters and we tell them things which do not normally appear in the Press; we give them background etc to add to their own information and they rightly treat that information as confidential except for the background purpose. Apart from this, to the Foreign Office sometimes the journalists come, the newspapermen come to talk with the Secretary-General or Foreign Secretary or some other Secretary; sometimes my colleague, the Deputy Minister meets them to discuss these various matters. In the course of these talks apparently, this representative of PTI placed his message before the Secretary-General and asked his general opinion as to what he thought about it and the Secretary-General then said that he did not consider it helpful in the circumstances. Whether rightly or wrongly, is immaterial. I did not know anything about this message at all. But a number of messages appeared round about this time, a little before and a little after, in the Press from the PTI correspondent about conditions in China. Some of these messages seemed to me not to be quite balanced judgment. I do not stop them; I am only stating my opinion to the House and it seemed to me

8. At the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference of December 1950, Deshbandhu Gupta, President of the Conference, asked that the External Affairs Ministry should appoint a Public Relations Section and that there should be a committee of foreign editors of Indian papers for liaison with the External Affairs Department as was the case in Britain, where, it was said, there was always a man on the staff of newspapers, called "Our Diplomatic Correspondent", who regularly interpreted the mind and intention of the British Foreign Office to the British public.

particularly unfortunate that anything that the correspondent wrote should have been written not from China itself but after coming to a place like Hong Kong, which is a very peculiar place today, a hotbed of the opponents and enemies of the Chinese Government collected there together and naturally full of rumours, and I thought that was not a very good place to write these messages. Of course, a man need not be affected by these, but the mere fact that a message emanated from there would be criticized, I thought, by people. Honourable Members may remember, long ago, there was that place on the Russian border—Riga—from which all kinds of messages came. Recently all kinds of messages used to come from Kalimpong about Tibet, exaggerated messages from all kinds of people. We, amongst ourselves, expressed this view that this method was not a very helpful or a desirable one. For the rest, as I said, the matter never came to the Government or the Cabinet or any individual member of the Cabinet. It did go to the Secretary-General who was consulted and he gave his opinion as I have stated.

Coming back to this clause, as my colleague the Law Minister has already said, we are accepting Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava's amendment, which also stands in the name of the Law Minister, that for the words "including, in particular, any existing or other law relating to", the words "or in relation to" be substituted. This simplifies or makes it more concise and the meaning clear. Apart from this, I regret, I am unable to accept any other amendment, and I hope that the House will adopt this clause in this slightly amended form unanimously or practically unanimously.

My colleague, the Law Minister, has dealt with many of the points that have been raised⁹ but, as the time fixed and fairly rigidly followed today allows me a few minutes I am taking advantage of it to put a few points before the House. The House will forgive me if I indulge in some repetition.

First of all, listening to the speeches made here today and on earlier days in regard to this particular clause, it was obvious that there was a very, very large consensus of opinion in favour of it. There was criticism on some minor points here and there, but there was a general acceptance of it. As there is now a very large and general acceptance in the country of the principle of abolishing these big zamindaris, we started this with a great measure of agreement.

There are two types of criticism which have been made or amendments put forward, or intended to be put forward. One was—I think it was Prof Shah—who wanted to extend this to cover practically all other kinds of property

9. In regard to clause 3, which empowered imposition of reasonable restrictions on the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed in Article 19(2), Durgabai and S.P. Moorkerjee urged that authority to legislate in this regard should be given only to Parliament. Kunzru moved an amendment which proposed reasonable restrictions.

other than land.¹⁰ Some other Members also put similar amendments forward, but subsequently did not pursue them. Prof Shah objected strongly to our aiming or trying to bring about small holdings, on the ground that this will come in the way of any real land reform in the future.¹¹

Now that may be so. Nevertheless, if Prof Shah thinks or anyone else thinks that any other course is practicable today I think he is completely out of touch with realities. Or, in the alternative we arrive at the strange conclusion—following Prof Shah's argument—that we should not touch this big zamindari system, because in converting it into small holdings and peasant proprietorships and the like we do not go really towards our goal, but possibly get stuck up there. In other words, we should leave the big zamindari system to continue, till with one sweep of some big broom, we can change it into some other form of tenure either collectivised or cooperative large-scale farming, etc. Now it is perfectly true that logically and scientifically considering, ultimately large-scale cooperative farming will be necessary. What type of cooperative it should be is another matter—because a larger number of small farmers can cooperate together or there might be big farms; there might be State farms or dozens of variety of such cooperative farms. I am not going into that question. But the point is that at the present moment for us to think of bringing that about is completely out of the realm of reality.

May, I, in this connection, give the House an instance which should make us pause and think. That is the instance of China where there are no Fundamental Rights to come in the way, where there is no compulsion of paying any compensation to anybody, where one might almost say they had a clean slate to write upon, and where there is an urge towards taking to some kind of socialist or communist society. Nevertheless, in spite of all this the land reforms they have indulged in have resulted in the creation of millions of smaller farmers, which, normally speaking, should be opposed to the ideal they are aiming at, because where you have socialism or communism or any other "ism" you cannot get rid of or bypass or ignore the feelings of millions of people in your country and, especially, the people who are attached to the land and in whose blood there is something of that land. Therefore, the Chinese Government, eager and keen to bring about basic agrarian changes, nevertheless have created a very large body of peasant proprietors. What the future will be there, I do not know.

Now for anyone in India at the present moment to talk about changes which might be said to go beyond what the Chinese Government of the day

10. K.T. Shah wanted to extend the principle of amendment to personal property also, and not merely confine it to landed estates. Equality of treatment should be maintained in that regard as between personal property and real property.
11. Shah suggested a reorganisation of land wherein the ownership rights of existing zamindars and their intermediaries would be taken over with or without compensation.

have brought about does seem to me completely lacking in understanding of the situation in India. Now it is true that of all the subjects and all the problems that we discussed, ultimately and finally, the biggest problem is that of land, and it has to be partly because land is there and you just cannot bypass it, and partly because we are fundamentally an agricultural country, and however much progress we might make in big industry, or the like, nevertheless, agricultural land will continue to play a dominant part in India. That is because a vast proportion of our population is engaged in or dependent on agriculture. Therefore the land problem is today and will continue to be the biggest problem—whether you look upon it from the point of view of the large number of people engaged or of food production which is vital and of high priority, or any other way. Now this whole concept of the abolition of the zamindari system came up before us, because we felt this inner urge of our people, because we heard the cry of millions of people and, sometimes, those deep murmurs and rumblings, which, if not listened to and if not answered, create big revolutions and changes in the country. So we took this step rather slowly and hesitatingly and it has taken a mighty long time. Nevertheless we are on the way. Therefore it became of the highest importance and urgency that we should do something in this Parliament to remove any other obstructions that might remain, whatever they might be. Because the problem we deal with is ultimately something bigger than the Constitution, and Constitutions are upset if that problem is not dealt with properly. They are upset not by your vote and mine but by those big upheavals that have taken place from time to time in countries and that are taking place in the greater part of Asia today.

I lay stress on this because of the deep significance of this problem which is something much more than legality and constitutionalism or compensation or the like. We have tried to deal with this problem in a democratic way, in as reasonable a way as possible, so as to avoid injustice as far as possible. But then what is the measure and yardstick of your justice and injustice in this matter? If you bring me some Article in the Constitution to say that so much compensation should be paid because of something there about non-discrimination or equality, well, that may be perfectly right; but if it leads you to the conclusion that if that is strictly followed no major agrarian reform can take place, then obviously that Article in the Constitution is wrong because it comes in the way of something that is important and urgent and of the most vital significance and that Article has to be amended or changed or done away with, as you like. But the major thing is you have to keep going in regard to land. Whatever your policy, you have to change the present system which is an out-of-date system, which is against progress, etc. Nobody can tell me that it involves an upset. Of course it involves an upset. But it involves a lesser upset, and you will find that we are proceeding slowly, gradually,

weighing things, so that there is less of injustice and upset than what you will find in any country that has dealt with this problem.

I have been reminded again and again in the course of the last two or three days of a certain word I used—adequate compensation. Of course, adequate. But the opinion of Mr Hussain Imam and my opinion may differ vastly as to what “adequate” is.¹² Because, as I said in my speech when this Article was being adopted in the Constituent Assembly, we have to balance two things all the time, the rights of the individual and the rights of the community. We do not want to crush the individual even for the sake of the community. I agree. But we cannot allow the individual to override the rights of the community. And the rights of the community in the final balance are more important, because ultimately they affect the rights of the individual too.

Criticism is made of a lack of uniformity, of the variety of these Acts, of the approaches to the problem in various States and provinces. Perfectly true. But conditions differ in these various States and provinces. It is possible that there might have been a little more uniformity and perhaps some things that seem odd might have been corrected too by a little care. But then you have to deal with the democratic process as it functions. You have to deal with each individual State and its Assembly and its people and its peasantry and all the others as they are. It is not right, except in the most extreme cases, for the Central Government to intervene and interfere in these things.

Hussain Imam: It has the power of certification.

JN: I know it has the power of certification. The power of certification, so far as I understand, does not mean that you can change laws and evolve new laws. It is intended to see that nothing absolutely wrong is there and, if it is there, to take it out and cure injustice and the like. It is not a radical kind of second Chamber looking into and changing everything. The House knows very well that in all federal Constitutions there is an inherent conflict between the State and the federal Centre, each being jealous of its rights and all these difficulties arise. The way to deal with it, and I think it is more or less open to us even in regard to these laws which have been passed and which we seek to validate here, is that, first of all, we have to validate them and go ahead because nothing is more dangerous than delay in this matter. At the same time as we do that, I would appeal to and request the State Assemblies which have passed them to look into them carefully, to remove any injustice that

12. Hussain Imam, referring to the dictum laid down by Nehru that “we must pay fair, adequate compensation (to zamindars) and not too much”, opposed the discrimination in compensation practised in different States and suggested that zamindaris could be abolished only after payment of sufficient compensation.

they can by executive action where necessary, by some amending measure but they can only do that once they get going with this. Uptil now, they have been checked and hampered: they do something and either by judicial decision or something else they are hampered and all kinds of injunctions come out and all kinds of lawyers flood the land and prevent any decent person from doing anything. What is one to do about it? One must get rid of this mischief. Only then can you improve what you have done. Otherwise your energy and time is taken up in meeting other peoples' obstruction. You can only look into these injustices when this major injustice and obstruction is removed. You cannot expect us to waste our time over petty injustices when this major injustice, a thing which we have been arguing for the last generation, is stopped by people who have no conception of the reality in the Indian scene today. Those, who think in legalistic terms, do they know that millions of people are on the move? So this is the first fundamental thing. These laws must go and must be effective. Having done that then we will look into the injustices and so far as I am concerned and my Government is concerned, I shall request each State Government which is concerned in this matter to look into this deeply and carefully and to remove any injustices.

My friends from Bihar, my zamindar friends and colleagues here were good enough to point out what they thought were injustices and hardships which the people suffer from.¹³ I have no opinion about them; I do not know but I promised them that I would look into the matter and I am glad to say that the representatives of the Bihar Government who were here promised to look into the matter, so that we might remove them insofar as we can, but we can do that only—I would beg of you to remember—if we are not continually entangled in law courts and litigation, because when a challenge comes the challenge is met in other ways. No Government will listen to me. If a provincial Government has to fight that case in a law court, do you think they are going to listen to me to look into this injustice and that? They will not be in a mood; I would like to be listened to but the mood will be absent, the mood of trying to do that. That is the major approach to this problem. Obviously the whole purpose of the Constitution, of this law, of this amendment, this particular Article and all these zamindari legislations is to deal fundamentally with what is called the zamindari system, by whatever name you may call it. I am glad that the words jagirs, *inams*, etc., are included because some people thought they may not be sure and jagirs are more important than zamindaris and

13. Syamanandan Sahaya, Hussain Imam and T. Hussain from Bihar argued that with the amendment of the Constitution (Article 31) the income of the zamindars would be greatly reduced and they would almost become paupers. Hussain Imam analysed the difficulties and hardships people in Bihar were put to, while Syamanandan Sahaya expressed the hope that the difficulties might possibly be smoothened out now if Nehru looked into the matter himself.

talukdars are more important than zamindars. It is perfectly true, if I may say so, a still more out-of-date form of land tenure or no tenure, whatever it is, will have to be included. It is essentially a major obstacle. It is not meant to affect the tiller of the soil except to improve his condition. Now, of course, the abolition of the zamindari system is not the end of the story. What must follow it is land reform. Otherwise it is only half-way but we have got stuck up in this; we could not go far in that matter. It has to follow.

Some of my friends from the Punjab were very anxious not to be misunderstood in their province because the word "zamindar" has a somewhat different meaning there than normally in some of the big zamindari provinces.¹⁴ We of course know that and whenever we talked in the past—10, 15 or 20 years—of the abolition of the zamindari system, those who did not like us or our policies in the Punjab immediately took advantage and went to the poor zamindars of the Punjab and succeeded in telling them: "they are going to abolish the zamindari system" which is absurd. We are talking about something entirely different. Nobody is going to touch that kind of zamindar in this land. That was made quite clear. So that, normally speaking, of course, this does not refer to the ryotwari system. I think it was Mr Hussain Imam or some one else who interrupted Dr Ambedkar and said something about the so-called peasant proprietors or ryots who may hold very large acreage of land: may be a thousand acres.¹⁵ Such things do happen. Technically they may come in; but that is unjust. What we should aim at ultimately is to bring about as much measure of equality about this as possible; no perfect equality, I mean; but these big differences should go. So far as this particular matter is concerned, it deals for the present with the zamindari, jagirdari etc, systems. The rest will no doubt follow.

As Dr Ambedkar has said, we have sought to change this Article with a few words of clarification.¹⁶ I think Mr Kashinath Rao Vaidya has proposed the addition of two Hyderabad Acts which we are prepared to accept.¹⁷

14. Ranbir Singh said that the abolition of jagirdari and zamindari might be interpreted in the Punjab in a different sense. He mentioned that in the Punjab the definition of the word "estate" was a different one and some people might apprehend that it might cover the rights of the peasant proprietors, who might be holding one or two acres.
15. When Ambedkar stated that there was no intention on the part of Government that the provisions contained in Article 31A were to be employed for the purpose of dispossessing ryotwari tenants, Hussain Imam interrupted saying "however big they might be."
16. Ambedkar mentioned that some people felt that while Government had taken note of the laws that prevailed in Part A States with regard to the definition of the word "estate", it had not taken sufficient notice of the definition of the word "estate" operating in Part B States. In order to remove that doubt he felt it necessary to amplify the definition of the word "estate".
17. The Hyderabad (Abolition of Jagirs) Regulation, and the Hyderabad Jagirs (Commutation) Regulation.

One honourable Member referred to the concept of property.¹⁸ I do not wish to take up the time of the House; but the subject is a fascinating one. The concept of property at one time included human beings as slaves. The concept of property included all land, including every man, woman and animal as being the personal property of the King or ruler of the time. Kings waged wars to get more and more personal property and everybody conquered was a slave. From those days to this, the concept has changed considerably. To imagine that the present stage or yesterday's stage is static is as wrong as to imagine that the age when human beings were considered as property was right. It is a changing concept. In fact, in the modern age, in the more developed countries, the concept of property has almost ceased to be material: not quite, but almost. Property becomes credit more and more, in the highly developed and industrialised countries. Anyway, this concept of property is a completely changing one and the concept of property in the rights of the community becomes more and more important. I am merely touching the point. It is not such a simple matter for a person to say that my property is being invaded. Property is being invaded all the time today: not in the communist countries like Russia and China, but in the highly capitalist countries like the USA, this thing is happening. This is inevitable in the modern age. So, if it happens here, it is not surprising. Therefore, I hope—not a question of hoping—I am sure that this House will adopt these clauses 4 and 5 and the Schedule (Ninth Schedule) attached, practically unanimously, because there is no other way for us. I would beg those who may differ with a word here or there even to consider that their disagreement or wanting us to go a little farther does not help at all. It only keeps you from going thus far. It is a strange impulse which wants to go farther, which gets hold of you and does not want to move at all. I do not understand that. So, that, if you really accept this, what I consider, axiomatic truth that the temper of the age and the position today in Asia and India requires rapid agrarian changes, and if you want these changes to come democratically, peacefully and with as little injustice as possible, then, we have to follow some such path and try to lessen the injustices wherever we can. But, it is no good one trying to stop that, because in trying to stop it and in trying to perhaps grab something more, it is quite possible you may lose all, by other forces coming into play, forces other than Parliament, Constitution and laws. We do not want these forces to come in and upset the whole appercart. Therefore we proceed with care and also we must proceed with rapidity.

18. Syamanandan Sahaya mentioned that Articles 31 A and 31 B had introduced a change in the concept of private property and the policy of the Government in regard to it.

16. The Constitution (First Amendment) Bill¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: We have arrived at the end of a long debate which has lasted for many days and on several occasions I have had occasion to intervene in this debate and now that we have nearly come to the end of it I thought that you might call upon me to speak and I was wondering what I could say, because I thought we had explored every aspect of this question and I had said whatever I had to say. In the course of this long debate, sometimes warm words had been exchanged, nevertheless on the whole, I thought I might say that it is true that this debate had been carried on on a fairly high level. There were lapses, of course, but still on the whole, I felt that this debate has not only been a good experience for all of us in this Parliament but also for the country. It is not so much because of the matter in the debate, that is, the amendments moved on our behalf to the Constitution, and the way all the issues were debated; nevertheless some issues were raised which were not related directly to those amendments but which happened to be in peoples' minds owing to their fears or suspicions or which perhaps they brought in because they wanted to bring them in whether they had any reason for that or not. So that we have had a great debate. Until a few minutes ago, I did not quite know what to say, but I am grateful to the honourable Member who preceded me for having given me some ideas on the subject, some thoughts on the subject and to have shown to me more vividly than I realised in the course of the last ten or twelve or fifteen days what the real motive of this opposition has been, because I say this opposition is not a true opposition, is not a faithful opposition, is not a loyal opposition. I say it deliberately. Dr Mookerjee objected strongly when he was interrupted. I do not object to interruptions. I invite him to do so.

S.P. Mookerjee: I say yours is not a true Bill.

JN: I say that Dr Mookerjee's statement is a false statement. I say it deliberately.

S.P. Mookerjee: Your statement is absolutely false.

JN: I know that Dr Mookerjee has said that. By saying that, it will not make any difference, but the kind of statements that my honourable friend has made in his last speech and the previous speeches is scandalous. I say that because...

1. 2 June 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol XII & XIII, Part II, columns 10091-10103.

S.P. Mookerjee: Because your intolerance is scandalous.

JN: The country will judge, not only this House but the country will judge, and it has become the fashion in this country for some people to go about in the name of nationalism and in the name of liberty to preach the narrowest of doctrines, of communalism and those things which restrict the liberty.

S.P. Mookerjee: You are an arch-communalist, responsible for the Partition of the country.

JN: The honourable member need not get excited and he is going to hear many more truths before I have done with it.

S.P. Mookerjee: You will also hear many truths.

JN: We here have had to put up with much from a few Members in this House who have challenged....

S.P. Mookerjee: That is dictatorship and not democracy.

Govind Malaviya: ... can there be a running commentary from one Member upon another's speech all the time?

JN: I do not mind that. I have invited it because I know.

Govind Malaviya: You may not mind it but I do not want this running commentary all the time.

JN: I only wanted to just see how much restraint Dr Mookerjee had.

S.P. Mookerjee: What restraint have you shown?

JN: Let us examine these ten days' debate and the truth behind it. Here we were putting forward some amendments, amendments dealing with important matters because anything dealing with the Constitution is important, but nevertheless, what were they? We are told: You are curbing, you are destroying the liberty, etc. I say any man who says, any group which says, any newspaperman who says that, lies, and knows that he lies, and I challenge everyone of them.

Hussain Imam: The word "lies" is not parliamentary.

JN: Any person who says that these amendments of mine curb the liberty of the Press, I say, he utters an absolute untruth and I challenge him. We have

put up and restrained ourselves during these many days with two or three Members of this House who have brought this up again and again and I challenge them again. They are repeating an untruth and they will have to stand by the untruth not only here but in the public market-place and everywhere; we challenge them to combat everywhere, intellectually or any kind of combat on this and every other issue.

S.P. Mookerjee: Except physically.

Deputy Speaker: I would like the honourable Prime Minister to be allowed to go on without interruption.

JN: The honourable Member is used to other types of conflicts.

S.P. Mookerjee: Not cowardice.

JN: Look at these amendments that we have moved and the House has passed by vast, tremendous and stupendous majorities. Honourable Members, who are in a small minority and two or three other Members,² who, I am glad to say, have drifted away from us, and I welcome the fact that they have drifted away from us elsewhere; may they be welcome elsewhere because we are happy without them—have come here and instead of reasoning with this House, instead of arguing with it, instead of bringing forward arguments to advance the subject of the debate, tell us that the country is against us, that they are ninety and we are ten, and that we are tied up on account of the party whip.³ I ask, is this the stuff that the honourable Member thinks can be doled across in this way and listened to and accepted by us? If the honourable Member wishes to challenge us, I accept the challenge here, in the country, and everywhere.

S.P. Mookerjee: Why not have a referendum on this Bill?

JN: I accept it everywhere: not only of the honourable Member, but of every person who wishes to challenge. We accept it, I say.

S.P. Mookerjee: Mutual acceptance.

2. Six members of the Select Committee submitted their minutes of dissent. Apart from these, Kripalani had left the Congress on 17 May 1951.

3. S.P. Mookerjee had said that there was much discontent in the country and that feelings of adoration, of confidence and of affection had disappeared from the people and there was a lot of criticism against the Government. He had added that 95% of the people who had voted for the Bill were all subject to the whip of one political party.

JN: We have had enough of soft dealing. If there is to be hard dealing, there are going to be hard blows all round.

During the last fortnight, in the Select Committee and outside, we have dealt with this measure as softly, as gently and in as friendly a way as possible, to meet every argument. We tried to discuss this in a way which sought to find common ways of agreeing to things. We agreed to some things; we could not agree to others. Anyhow, our method was one of friendly agreement insofar as we could. Nevertheless, we find here charges being flung at us, insinuations being made, and things said which have not the faintest substance in fact. If that is said, we can fight both here and outside. We are not going to tolerate this kind of business. I want to make it perfectly clear to everyone. We have put forward deliberately these amendments to the Constitution. We have gone through them patiently, trying to convince and we have convinced a great majority in this House and I believe we can convince and we have convinced a great majority in this country. I shall tell you why.

What are these amendments? Some honourable Members who are advanced socialists and the like have spoken, one or two of them, against the amendments. They have informed us that they are going to vote against them. What are these amendments? The major amendments are in regard to Article 19 and Article 31. In the last speech that we heard,⁴ we were told how we were running amuck through this Constitution because of some Acts that we had put in at the end of these amendments. What do these Acts deal with and what is the purpose of Article 31? When I find those gentlemen, Members of this House who presume themselves to be socialists, speak in the manner they have done when we bring forward such amendments, all I can say is that there is very little of socialism in them, if there is any sense at all in them. Here is a proposition—a major proposition—the land problem with which we have been wrestling for years and years. We have come up against difficulties, legal difficulties and the rest. But nothing can be allowed to come in the way—I say nothing—in the way of effecting a solution of the land problem in India which is the major problem of our country. If the courts come, we respect them. We obey them. But the courts have to carry out the Constitution and if the Constitution comes in the way, it is this Parliament and no other that can change the Constitution of India. Are we to submit to things and wait till some great revolution comes to change the condition of things? Land reform has become absolutely essential and we have been yearning for it for generations and we have been working for it. We have to give effect to it without let or hindrance. If anybody comes in the way we have to remove him. There is no other way, because millions wait and millions have been waiting for decades for this. Do you think that lawyers or any petty legal

4. Of S.P. Mookerjee.

arguments are going to come in the way of these millions? I am amazed at the arguments that have been advanced by some people here. They seem to live in some distant age which has passed. But we have lived in the past and we have worked for these changes. We can say with pride that we have brought about these major changes and not these petty critics of the Government and it is we who are going to bring about major changes in this country. We are not going to allow petty critics and others to stop changes. They advance arguments which might have had some relevance some hundreds of years ago but which have no relevance in India today.

In this matter we have been asked many things. Prof Saksena said, referring to me, that I had been bargaining with reactionary elements to get something which I wanted.⁵ Let me assure him that I have been amazed at his reactionary attitude in this whole debate. Reaction is not necessarily concerned merely with words which denote reaction. If Prof Saksena knows anything about revolutionary technique and revolutionary history and revolutionary literature, he will know that the greatest reaction is the reaction that presumes to talk in revolutionary language and acts differently. Prof Saksena informs us that he is compelled by circumstances, by his conscience or by the heavens to vote against this measure, and therefore, he is going to vote against the measure as a whole, even though the major part of it and the most important part of it deals with this land business and agrarian legislation. Let him realise that this is the major aspect of the measure and he is going to vote against it. Why? I do not know, except that he has not given enough thought to it, that he has been talking so much about it that he has not sufficiently thought about it. But really, I wish the House would realise and honourable Members on the other side should realise what we are talking about. Have they a sense of reality and a grip on the reality? Or are they living in a world divorced from realities? When they talk, they confront us with something that was said in the middle of the eighteenth century in America or in the nineteenth century in some other country. But we are now in the middle of the twentieth century in India and we have to face the problems that confront us here in India and in the present world. Let us realise that. We should not forget all that has passed. They have got their lessons for us. But it is impossible to solve present problems under conditions which somebody mentioned some one hundred or two hundred years ago. And I say to you, take this question of land reforms in this country which is the major question, which is the important question

5. Shibbanlal Saksena feared that the reactionaries in his Cabinet had bargained with the Prime Minister, who throughout his speech "was apologetic for amending Article 19(2) and Article 15 as well as the other Articles."

before which every other question is irrelevant. In this question of land reform here, we are year after year held up—I do not blame the courts. The courts are functioning as they should in interpreting the laws and we respect their interpretations and abide by them. But we also have the power to change the law if they construe a law in a way which does not fit in with our intentions because it is a major demand in India that land reform must come and zamindari system must go and everything that pertains to it. It has been held up long enough and the process that some of our friends opposite suggest means holding it up longer and longer till this court decides and that court decides. We have had enough of this holding up business and if you and I hold it up, there will be marching in the fields which will not help either the honourable Members or the country.

There is the strange method of some people who tell us “Oh, what you do does not go far enough. Therefore we will oppose it.” That is an argument which has been raised on one or two occasions in connection with this Bill. They say “if you of course went in for full-blooded socialism, we will support you and because you are going only 25 per cent, therefore we will not support you.” This argument can only come from a person who has nothing to do with reality, who lives in a world of ideas or in some secluded chamber or tower. We, I hope, have some relation to this world we live in. We have lived in the world of ideas and we have some relation to the world of facts. Both these impel us to go ahead as far as the Indian people permit us to go ahead. What is the good of any person telling me that peasant proprietorship is something reactionary? It comes in the way of full-blooded socialism. Of course, it does. It comes in the way of all kinds of socialistic or communistic experiments. It comes in the way of even efficient production; I admit that. Nevertheless admitting it, I say, as I said in the earlier stage, that that is an inevitable thing for us to do. We can experiment with large-scale farming, we can experiment with State farming and socialistic and cooperative farms and all manner of things, we can experiment but in the state of affairs today, it is not possible, as it was not possible even in a country like China with a clean slate to write upon, to go on with what might be called socialistic farming. Because we cannot do that, therefore do not go in that direction at all—that is not an argument which can be intelligently put forward or intelligently accepted.

We have been told repeatedly about the restraints and curbs we are putting on the Press. I have listened to this again and again and I have reminded honourable Members and I have asked them to point out what the restraints and curbs are. Yet the phrase has been repeated. I say it is completely and absolutely devoid of truth—that phrase. All you might say is that you have taken some power under the Constitution which might enable you in future to put some restraint and curbs. Possibly there might be some truth in that, and I admit it will enable this Parliament to do something. The fact of the matter

is people talk of fear. Those honourable Members who propose these amendments are full of fear in their hearts. They are afraid of Parliament, they are afraid of this House and they are afraid of the Indian people. They try to seek shelter in some paper enactments, etc, against their own people and against this Parliament. It is right that we should give them shelter. It is important to give them shelter, not to them but to the country, so that it may not act rashly on them. I admit that. But remember when times are changing and revolutionary processes are working in a country, any rigidity means the breakdown of that system. You must have flexibility, you must have adaptability to changing social and economic conditions and changing ideas. Any system which is rigid cannot survive today. In bringing forward these amendments to the Constitution—they do not go far, only honourable Members' speeches appeared to make them go far—we are doing, if I may say so, a very important and vital task. People have said, "You cannot touch the Constitution." It is of the utmost importance that people should realise that this great Constitution of ours, over which we laboured for so long, is not a final and rigid thing, which must either be accepted or broken. A Constitution which is responsive to the people's will, which is responsive to their ideas, in that it can be varied here and there, they will respect it all the more and they will not fight against it, when we want to change it. Otherwise, if you make them feel that it is unchangeable and cannot be touched, the only thing to be done by those who wish to change it is to try to break it. That is a dangerous thing and a bad thing. Therefore, it is a desirable and a good thing for people to realise that this very kind of Constitution that we have fashioned after years of labour is good insofar as it goes but as society changes, as conditions change we amend it in the proper way. It is not like the unalterable law of the Medes and the Persians that it cannot be changed, although the world around may change.

Therefore, it was a right thing that when we felt that some parts of the Constitution, as the judiciary interpreted them, were coming in the way of social or other progress, it was the right thing and the inevitable thing for us to come to this House and ask this House to approve of certain changes. The changes are not great or vital.

A great deal has been said about those changes and yet I do say, as I said at an earlier stage, that every change that is referred to here is implied in the Constitution itself. Take Article 31A or 31B dealing with land reform or the abolition of the zamindari. The Constituent Assembly took great and considerable care to lay down that these changes should not be challenged in a court of law. In spite of this care, perhaps the language was not clear enough. That was our fault and so it has been challenged and these reforms have been in consequence delayed. Now, are we to wait for this delaying process to go on and for this process of challenge in courts of law to go on month after month and year after year?

Some honourable Members opposite have said, "Why not wait for this court or that court to decide?"⁶ I want to tell them that a few million people have waited for too long a period. There is not going to be much more waiting by these millions outside. And these people who talk about waiting do not know what is stirring the hearts of those millions outside.

The honourable Member opposite referred to the discontent against the Government.⁷ Maybe he is right and there are many matters over which the people are discontented with the Government; but the Government is discontented with itself also. But I can tell the honourable Member that in this matter of the abolition of zamindari the Government is dead right and the various State Governments are dead right, whatever else may be said to the contrary. And if this reform does not go through quickly enough then there will be trouble for those who delay.

Therefore we have to understand realities and deal with them, understand not only realities but the justice of the cause. It is true that in doing these things on a vast scale you come up against difficulties and injustices. You cannot help it when you are dealing with vast social reforms and changes. You can try to remedy them and so I have suggested to the State Governments to look into the matter and remedy them, if necessary, by additional legislation. But the thing must go through: you cannot stop it. Nor stop for the law courts to declare whether the law is right or wrong. So also in regard to the amendment to Article 19(2). It is an amendment in regard to certain matters which widens the scope of law-making—undoubtedly so—partly because that scope had been narrowed too much, more particularly in regard to communal matters, communal discord and the rest of it. And that is a matter which we cannot leave to chance easily—the risks are too great.

My friend, Prof Shibban Lal Saksena, said something about my suddenly experiencing fear, a great deal of fear. Well, it is difficult to judge one's own fear or one's own lack of fear. I do not think I am terribly frightened about this or any development in this country, but sometimes I am a little frightened of the narrow-mindedness that begins to prevail in this country, of the lack of vision that spreads among people, because that is the thing which stunts our growth, which will prevent us from doing what we want to do, because neither a fine Constitution nor anything else that we may do will help us much if we are limited of mind and small of spirit. Therefore, it has become necessary to make these changes in the Constitution which by themselves do not do anything

6. S.P. Mookerjee said that without waiting for the decision of the court regarding a particular Regulation, which was a subject matter of dispute before a constituted court of law, "we are saying that that law is valid and is in accordance with the Constitution."
7. Mookerjee said that large sections of the people in the country were against Nehru and had got the impression that Government had failed to deal with some vital matters which concerned the daily welfare of millions of people.

except to give certain powers to Parliament, except to validate some laws, except to enable you to go ahead on the road of your choice. What that road is I do not know—it may vary. One sees ahead rather dimly, because many things happen today which we cannot control and which we cannot foresee. Therefore, we shall have to grope our way from day to day, week to week and year to year; if we think it is a clear way then we are mistaken.

The difficulty arises not in these amendments that we have moved and that you have passed in the second reading with such great majorities; the difficulty is not in them but somewhere behind them, hidden behind them—some ideas that fill people's minds of elections, of the general elections that are coming and everybody judging this from the standard and the yardstick of that election. Well, the election as I said is important in many ways, but if my word has any value I can assure the House that I did not have the election at all even remotely in my mind when I put these amendments forward. I have the election in mind for other reasons. I want this election to be a well-ordered election, I want it to bring out the wishes of the people of India whatever they may be. And I can tell you quite honestly that it does not matter to me overmuch ultimately, what those wishes are, how they are expressed, who comes out at the top. Because, I might regret some development—well, I cannot help it, if I regret it I dislike it and I should oppose it so far as I can—but I should like this country to develop the democratic process and grow on democratic lines. But we talk so much of democracy and of liberty, and those words are dear to us because most of our lives we have fought for freedom and liberty; and yet when you talk of democracy it means some kind of ordered liberty because a disordered liberty is not democracy, and it leads ultimately to the suppression of that liberty. We have seen—those of us who are acquainted with recent history—how too much talk of liberty has led to licence and has led to the suppression of that liberty. The history of Europe will show that; the history of other countries too. So, let us not be too sure of the liberty and freedom we possess. Let us cling to them and guard them jealously. But we will not guard them or preserve them by loose talk or loose action. Only by stern discipline and sternly understanding the limitation of freedom can we preserve them, for everything has its limitations, even freedom and even liberty. Without those limitations we endanger the very thing we stand for.

I need not say much about these amendments that this House has been considering for a number of days and has passed clause by clause. But nevertheless I would say that they have not been thought of or brought forward before this House with a view to restricting liberty or freedom in the slightest or with a view to restricting the freedom of the Press or expression in the slightest, but certainly with two points of view. One is to restrict certain forms of unbridled licence which has little to do with political opposition so

far as I understand it, and also to preserve that very freedom, because we are quite convinced that unless you have this ordered preservation of freedom, that freedom will go, and it will be very difficult for you to get it back. Therefore, after serious and full thought we brought this forward. It is no good considering this in the air. Honourable Members tell us: "You have not shown, or proved to us the dangers of the situation. What are the dangers?" Well I do not quite know what to reply to that. If honourable Members are not in full possession or fully acquainted with what is happening in the world today or in the India of ours, what can I tell them? When I said I am not afraid of any violent revolution breaking out, of course, Dr Mookerjee said that if such a thing happens, we have the emergency powers and the rest.⁸ But the House does not expect Government to use those emergency powers at the slightest provocation. They are not meant for that. It will be a bad thing for any Government to use emergency powers and get used to them. Therefore, we must normally create conditions which do not require the use of emergency powers at all. It is not a good thing to advise any Government to use those powers and I do submit that the amendments that we have put before this House and which the House has accepted more or less, are amendments which do not—so far as Governments are concerned—give any special powers to the Governments. Maybe slightly for the present they do give some powers: may be later when Parliament considers this matter, they may give those powers or take away, very likely, some of the powers that Government might possess today. Indeed some powers and some of the old laws should be put an end to.

In any event these measures that we have suggested to the House, do not directly have a bearing on the great issue that we have been debating. At any rate, I welcome this debate, not because of its intimate connection with these issues, but because it is good for us to talk about great matters, about the freedom of the Press and the freedom of the people and to educate ourselves and our people in the process.

Unfortunately, our politics in this country gradually drift away from great public debate: it is becoming or tends to become a parlour variety of debates. That is a bad thing for democracy. Let us have great debates on a high level, let us discuss the bearings of each problem and then come to decisions, so that the public may know our minds. Therefore, although this particular issue did not to my thinking raise these grave issues, nevertheless I have welcomed this great debate, because it has been good for us generally.

8. Mookerjee had said that in order to deal with an emergency Nehru had ample provisions in the Constitution for suspending any part of Fundamental Rights.

17. Summoning of Legislatures¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: Mr Kamath seemed to hint that there was some deep design or conspiracy about this attempt to amend the Constitution in this matter, and he said that the Prime Minister owed it to the House—I am quoting his words taken down verbatim—to say why these changes are proposed.² Well, I thought the Prime Minister had tried to do his duty by the House in explaining this matter when he first moved the motion on this Bill. Of course, it is a very simple matter; either the honourable Member was not present here, or was not paying heed to what the Prime Minister was saying.

Kamath: This particular matter was not referred to in his opening speech.

JN: However, it is a very simple matter. If you read this Article 85, it says the Houses of Parliament “shall be summoned to meet twice at least in every year.” Now according to one interpretation this House has not met at all this year;³ although honourable Members may have been sitting continuously for six months or thereabouts and working as hard as possible, according to the strict meaning of Article 85, Parliament has not met at all because it was last summoned in October last and not this year. So, this peculiar difficulty arises, that even if we meet once more—if we are prorogued now to meet in August or so—in no event can we meet twice this year, and there is a breach of the Constitution if that interpretation is put on the Article, which is obviously not meant by the framers of the Constitution.

S.P. Mookerjee: You may have prevented it by proroguing earlier. It was in your hands.

JN: In other words we can prevent it by not working at all but by coming for a week twice a year—there are so many ways of getting over the difficulty. But the main difficulty is: are we working according to the Constitution? And the more we work the less we do according to the wording of this Constitution

1. Reply to questions in Parliament, 2 June 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol XII & XIII, Part II, columns 9956-9960.
2. H.V. Kamath had mentioned that the Prime Minister had not told the House why the change in the Articles was contemplated, particularly the change relating to the President's summoning Parliament and the Governor summoning the Legislature.
3. K.T. Shah mentioned that there was a “further provision whereby you also fix or only lay down that not more than six months shall lapse as between the last date of the previous sessions and the date fixed for the next sessions. Now the date may be fixed, but the sitting may not take place. I, therefore, fear that these words will only lend colour to my apprehension that the change proposed here is liable to pave the way to dictatorship, which none, I hope, will welcome.”

which is obviously, if I may say so, an absurdity. The Constitution wants us to work, not to play, to meet frequently enough, not to keep away from meeting; and if we meet continuously but the meaning becomes that we do not meet at all, there is something wrong about the Constitution. If we met, as we might very well meet, continuously for the whole year barring small periods, as any working Parliament meets there may be no prorogation or no summoning in the course of that year at all as the Constitution wants. The question only arises when you think of the old tradition, of the old Assembly which met casually for a few weeks a year, and may be twice a year, and did some odd work and then went home and it is because of that, presumably, that this has been put in. But any working Parliament cannot just keep away from meeting because work accumulates and suffers. It was because of this actual difficulty, that it was thought that this Article might be changed so that this question of being summoned twice a year need not be there, because if we are meeting all the time, then are we to break up simply to be summoned again? Of course, we may be summoned twice a year or more.

Then we come to the active and the passive. I do not know much about grammar,⁴ but I know something about commonsense and the English language, and I just do not understand this interpretation that if you say, "the President shall summon", you hand over yourself with a rope round your neck to the President, that you may hang whenever the President pulls the rope or does not pull the rope. On the other side it is suggested that if you say, "the Houses of Parliament shall be summoned", obviously the question arises: by whom? But if you took the trouble to take out page 36 of the Constitution in Article 85 you are told that the President will summon....

Kamath: May summon.

JN: There is no "may" about it—he is the only authority that can summon, there is no other authority. That is to say, this Article 85 actually deals, in the passive and the active, in both the voices, with who should summon, who can summon and who only can summon there is no other authority which can summon, unless of course there is a breach of the Constitution and other things come into play. Therefore, as the Constitution is, it is only the President who can summon it, and if the President does not do his duty then other consequences may well arise. It is conceivable—I do not say it is out of the question—as Prof Shah pointed out, that the President and the Government of the day might conspire together behind the Constitution to set up a dictatorship

4. Kamath asked whether a sudden love for the active voice and dislike for the passive voice explained the language of Article 85 and the corresponding Article relating to the State Legislatures.

or an authoritarian regime.⁵ All these things are conceivable—anything is conceivable in the modern world. But my point is, if such a conspiracy can take place it can take place whether you write your Constitution in the active voice or the passive—it makes not the slightest difference which voice you choose, if people want to do it and take the risk of doing it. As a matter of fact, our saying, “the President shall summon” is much more mandatory on the President than saying, as it is said here, “The Houses of Parliament shall be summoned” and the President shall do so. The meaning is the same but if the President does not summon within six months it is a deliberate breach of the Constitution by the President and the Government of the day. It does not require any argument—you catch him immediately, he has not done a duty laid down, which is here an indirect duty. Maybe some minor excuse the President may advance, or not. Therefore, in a sense you bind down the President—and when I say the President I mean the Government of the day which is also bound down by the Constitution to do a certain thing. If they do not do it then other consequences follow. They have deliberately flouted the Constitution. What happens then? Well, many things may happen. Parliament then presumably comes into conflict with the usurping Government, or the Government that carries on without the goodwill of Parliament and the people. Well, a conflict occurs. That kind of a thing would, if it occurs, presumably be decided by the normal constitutional means—other means may come into play, one does not know. But to suggest a variety of means of convening Parliament—that if the President fails the Speaker might summon, or if the Speaker also fails fifty Members may ask for the summoning of Parliament—would create all sorts of complications. Suppose you say that fifty Members may summon: suppose the President summons on a particular day and the fifty Members on some other day later: or suppose two sets of fifty Members summon on different dates—all kinds of confusing situations may arise.

After all you have ultimately to have some final authority which you presume will function according to the Constitution. If it does not then you pick the axe and cut off the head, whether he is a President or anybody. That is the normal practice in Constitutions: that is the normal practice in revolutions. I do not understand the middle practice of confusing a Constitution with a revolution and a revolution with a Constitution. I, therefore, submit that the wording suggested is the right wording. It does not endanger the Constitution; it does not give any special or additional powers to the President to come in the way. Such powers as he gets, such mischief as the future President might do, is always inherent in the nature of things and inherent also in the power of the people to put an end to the President who does that mischief.

5. Shah saw the possibility of a danger of autocracy or dictatorship in the event of the President refusing to summon Parliament.

Now there is another point that Mr Kamath seemed to suspect—again some intrigue in the suggestion of the Address by the President.⁶ What is suggested here is merely that it should not necessarily have precedence. The difficulty is this that after the President has delivered his Address it is right that the Members should have two or three days to consider it and to propose motions and not immediately to have to deal with it. Otherwise two or three days may well be wasted and we will be doing nothing. So the idea is not to postpone consideration of that Address, but not to waste those two or three days. You may well do something else in those two or three days, fix a date for the consideration of the President's Address three or four days later and come well prepared with your motions and arguments. It would be absurd, of course, to try to discuss the President's Address long after it is delivered. To get over the difficulty of waste of time it was done. I understand that in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom it is deliberately laid down—I am speaking subject to correction—that it will not have precedence. It is deliberately laid down to preserve the right of Commons not to be hustled by the King. You need not go quite so far, but you should reserve the right yourself to consider it when it suits the convenience of the House, two or three days later. It is naturally for the Speaker and the House to consider it. Certainly it should be soon after it was delivered, though not immediately after.

Then Dr Deshmukh went in another direction and asked—why have all this troublesome business at all?⁷ If it is the pleasure of the Government and the mood of the President he might do so. If not why should we force him to do so. Leave it to their pleasures and their moods. And make it “may” instead of “shall”.

Well, I may say I do not think it is right to leave a thing of this kind to the moods or dispositions of the President or the Government of the day. It is right that we should not compel him to speak every time the House is summoned, but I think it is right to have a convention or a rule for the President to address the House at least once a year. He may do so more often—that thing may be left to convention. But let him address the House once a year and certainly at the beginning of the new Parliament. That is what is suggested. It is a very simple proposition. I do not see why Dr Deshmukh should be afraid of the word “shall” in that connection.

6. Kamath said that it would be showing disregard for the President's Address if the House did not discuss it before commencing any other business.
7. P.S. Deshmukh had said that the provision laid down that the procedure and the precedence would be “regulated by rules framed,” but the choice should be left to the President and it be not made compulsory for him to address at the commencement of every session. He added that if “every” was changed into “any” and “shall” into “may”, the whole difficulty would be solved.

The real difficulty of course is that this involves a certain preparation outside this House which is often troublesome. Members are aware that when a coach and six come all kinds of things have to be done for that purpose. Anyhow that trouble does not fall on the House or Members thereof, but on the administration of Delhi.

I suggest that the amendments proposed are not necessary,⁸ that the wording originally suggested and which has emerged from the Select Committee does meet the situation and get over the minor difficulties that have arisen without endangering the Constitution.

8. All the amendments were either withdrawn or negatived and the motion was adopted on 2 June 1951.

18. The Press and the Constitution (First Amendment) Bill¹

...Question: How is the constitutional amendment going to affect the Press?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not think it is going to affect the Press at all in any major way. You remember that I mentioned the possibility of our appointing a Press Commission, not on this narrow subject, but on a much broader subject—really something not quite so comprehensive but still on the lines of the UK Press Commission. That took two years—too long a time. But it might be desirable if we appointed some high-powered Commission in which naturally there should be three kinds of persons—public men of note, ie, unconnected with the Press, representatives of the Press—both of the managerial and editorial variety, and the working journalists. This particular question arising from the constitutional amendments is a very minor question. I do not think that, in spite of the heat raised in the recent debates, it affects the Press much. I cannot tell you definitely what we are going to do, but one thing one has to do anyhow and that is to put an end to certain obsolete laws. It is of course a negative thing. They are just there; they are of no good to anybody and they should be put an end to. The other thing is a positive question—framing laws which should take their place—a little more intricate and complicated. When any such step is taken inevitably it will be in full

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 11 June 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 51–57, 323–325, 394–397, 433–434, 446, 450–452, 462–463, 470, 487–488, 525–526.

consultation with the parties concerned. So far as the Press is concerned, it is interesting. The whole development is interesting. You will forgive me if I may say we talk so much about the freedom of the Press, but more and more I see that that freedom might as well be exercised by anyone who has money enough to buy up a paper. Recently, it is rather an odd experience for me to see a newspaper, a weekly paper, within a week or ten days completely change its policy, tone and everything except in regard to one matter and that was its rather extreme dislike of Government and me. That was a common factor but otherwise from being pro-something very much it became anti—that very thing next week. That is the freedom of the Press! Of course, it has every right to be this or that, but it really represents the freedom of the gentleman who bought it up to express his views or of the group, whatever it was.

Q: Do you think that gentleman has any interest in the Press as such?

JN: He is probably not interested at all. I do not know.

Q: You said that whatever the newspapers said on the amendment of the Constitution was set of lies.² Do you still maintain that?

JN: The newspapers were not referred to at all. What a particular member of Parliament said was what I referred to³....

2. See *ante*, p. 234.

3. S.P. Mookerjee said that the amendment involved the "curbing of inherent rights of individuals." He also said that Nehru was imposing restrictions because he had failed to tackle some sections of the "yellow press".

19. To Chief Ministers¹

New Delhi

June 13, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

We are considering a proposal to appoint a Commission for the Press in India.² This Commission will, I hope, survey the many problems connected with the Press. There is one aspect of this matter in which your Government can help.

1. This letter is also printed in G. Parthasarathi (ed), *Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-1964*, Vol 2 (New Delhi, 1986), p. 416.

2. The Press Commission was appointed on 23 September 1952 to examine the working of the Press in India.

I should like you to have a note prepared about the growth of highly offensive, slanderous and sometimes indecent writings in the Press. If possible cuttings or extracts might be given.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To R.R. Diwakar¹

New Delhi
June 21, 1951

My dear Diwakar,²

Your letter of today's date. I have met Deshbandhu Gupta and Goenka this afternoon and had a talk with them. I do not think anything more need be done at present.

I am myself of the view that we should bring forward some simple legislation during the next session to put an end to some obsolete laws. As for other legislation of a more positive kind, this will require rather careful consideration and consultation with people concerned.

Personally I am not at all in favour of pre-censorship at any time or anywhere. I think some of our security laws have gone too far and are even contrary to some provisions in our Constitution.

In my fortnightly letter to Chief Ministers I have told them quite definitely that I do not wish them to take advantage of these obsolete laws or repressive legislation simply because of the amendment to the Constitution.³

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.
2. He was at this time the Minister of State, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
3. See *post*, pp. 572-573.

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

II. The Hindu Code Bill

1. The Hindu Code Bill¹

Please write in Hindi to Khushi Lal Tiwari that I am sorry to learn that any responsible Congressmen are doing propaganda against the Hindu Code Bill. This Bill has been adopted by the Congress Party in Parliament and is our official measure. While it is open to any individual Congressman to hold contrary views, it is not open to him to do any propaganda against the Bill. Nor is it open to him to say that the Congress as a body is not in favour of the Hindu Code Bill. Such a statement is not only incorrect but is improper.

1. Note to the Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, 9 May 1951. JN Collection.

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

III. The Mudgal Case

1. Motion on the Conduct of H.G. Mudgal¹

This is an unusual motion² and I believe it is the first time that such a motion has been placed before Parliament. I hesitated for some time before doing so and gave careful consideration to the matter. The dignity of the House and the proper behaviour of every honourable Member is dear to the House and I felt that any action taken by a Member, which might not be in consonance with propriety and good behaviour and what is expected of him should be inquired into. That would be fair both to the House and to the Member concerned.

Some time ago, in March, information reached us that at a Board meeting of the Bombay Bullion Association held on the 9th March, 1951, the President informed the Directors that in connection with some of the problems like option business, stamp duties, etc, about which the Association wanted to agitate, a Member of Parliament had agreed to canvass support and make propaganda in Parliament on payment of Rs 20,000. The name of the Member was mentioned. There was some opposition to this proposal, but ultimately the Directors decided that Rs 5,000 should be utilised for this purpose. This was recorded in the minutes of the meeting, though no name was mentioned.

At a subsequent meeting of the Board of the Bullion Association held on the 30th March, the President informed the Members that Rs 1,000 out of the Rs 5,000 sanctioned by the Board, had been paid to Shri Mudgal,³ who was already moving the matter actively. It was further stated that Shri Mudgal had invited him to Delhi to meet some of the MPs and the Ministers concerned, with whom he was arranging interviews. Shri Mudgal had promised to put questions in Parliament and thus create the necessary atmosphere for getting support to the objectives of the Bullion Association.

Meanwhile, on March 24th, the Finance Minister received a letter from Shri Mudgal stating that the President and some Directors of the Bombay Stock Exchange were coming to Delhi and asking for an appointment for

1. Discussion in Parliament, 6 June 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol XII & XIII, Part II, columns 10260-10262, 10271-10273, 10277-10278, 10280, 10296-10297. Extracts.
2. The Prime Minister had moved the motion to set up a Special Committee of Parliament to investigate into the charges against H.G. Mudgal, a Member of Parliament, of having abused his position by promoting the interests of several business firms of Bombay and for having concealed his connection with the Bombay Bullion Association in his communications to the Prime Minister.
3. A publisher and writer; edited and published *Indian Market* and wrote books entitled *Human Order* and *Soviet and Fascist Dictatorship, a Comparative Study*; a Member of Parliament at this time.

them. The Finance Minister replied that he did not understand why the Bombay Stock Exchange Members should seek to make an appointment with him through Shri Mudgal. He would prefer to deal direct with any request that might be made.

Late in March Shri Mudgal sent notice of a question to be put in Parliament. This question No. 2742 was put down for an answer on the 2nd April. In this question Shri Mudgal enquired whether Government are aware of the views of the President and the Directors of the Bombay Bullion Exchange that smuggling of bullion resulting in the loss of foreign exchange can be stopped by permitting regulated imports of bullion. The Finance Minister replied that Government were aware of the views expressed, but did not consider that the situation was such as to warrant any change in their present policy in the matter.

The request for an interview and the question in Parliament appeared to be in furtherance of the offer made by Mr Mudgal to carry on an agitation, in the interests of the Bullion Association in Parliament, for which it had been stated, he had asked for a sum of money.

On the 20th April, I had an interview with Shri H.G. Mudgal in the course of which I informed him of the information we had received. He told me in answer that he was connected with an organisation which published the *Indian Market* and did research work also. In the course of his professional work, he and his staff had helped the Bullion Association by preparing a pamphlet and a memorandum. His staff had been paid Rs 1,000 for the pamphlet and another Rs 1,000 for the memorandum. Further the press of the *Indian Market* had been paid Rs 700 for printing charges of the memorandum. He denied having asked Rs 20,000 or any other sum from the President of the Bombay Bullion Association. Whatever he had received was, according to him, in connection with his professional work and there was nothing underhand about it.

I met Mr Mudgal for a second time later and further discussed this matter with him. He also gave me his reply on the lines which I just mentioned in writing. The explanation that he gave me did not appear to me to be satisfactory.

I have therefore thought it fit to place this matter before the House and to suggest the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee to inquire into it. It seemed to me that an ad hoc Parliamentary Committee would perhaps be more suitable for an investigation in such a matter than the Committee of Privileges of the House under Chapter XIII, Rules 181, etc of the Rules of Procedure.

Notice of this motion was given to Mr Mudgal on the 2nd June and I had requested him to be present in the House today so that he might give such explanation to the House as he might consider necessary.

What Mr Malaviya⁴ suggested is not quite clear to me. There is no question of any departmental enquiry. Because there is no department concerned unless it is some department concerned with Parliament that may do so. Any further enquiries would have involved an investigation in Bombay possibly with the President and Members of the Bullion Association and I did not feel myself competent to undertake that directly or indirectly. As the Speaker said all that we had before us was certain data which seemed to us to be *prima facie* evidence of a certain kind which deserved further enquiries. Either it is not *prima facie* adequate and therefore we allowed the matter to lapse or there was room for further enquiry, a proper enquiry. I could not think of any other way of holding that enquiry except by bringing such a motion before the House. The only alternative was again to bring it before the House for the Committee of Privileges. Those were the only two alternatives that I had before me and it seemed to me, after consultation, that this ad hoc Committee of Enquiry would be a somewhat more flexible procedure and also it was not quite clear to me whether strictly speaking any privilege of the House was involved. For these reasons, I have brought forward this motion for this enquiry because there appeared to be a *prima facie* case which may be proved or disproved. Government have no interest whatsoever in the matter except to safeguard the honour of the House and Government will be happy indeed if after due enquiry, the Committee find that there was no grave impropriety or whatever their finding may be. This matter came to our notice sometime in the middle of March ie, two and a half months ago. During this period I tried to get as much further information as possible. Further developments took place towards the end of March and as soon as I had got information about these developments, I saw Mr Mudgal in April. I read out to him the information that I had received to which he replied, as I had stated, that that information was not correct ie, the statement reported to have been made by the President of the Bombay Bullion Association. I had no basis in fact so far as he was concerned. He did not know what the President had said but he certainly never asked, he said, for that sum of money. Then he told me about his professional activities, about his staff of the *Indian Market* helping the Association by preparing Memoranda and Brochure, etc. He said it was a part of his professional duties. Thereupon we had further correspondence and I wrote to him some weeks later again that it might be desirable for me to bring this matter in the shape of a motion before the House. Again, I saw him and discussed this matter and he reiterated his previous stand. Later I thought it would be better for me to put to him in writing some specific points. Previously I had told him only orally. I put it to him in writing. Having gone through all these processes and after consultation with some colleagues and

4. Govind Malaviya.

others, I came to the conclusion that we could gather little further information unless, of course, we carried on a definite enquiry in Bombay by some procedure. Now that procedure could either be a departmental proceeding which seemed to be improper or some procedure to get a Parliamentary Committee appointed for the purpose. I shall read the letter that he wrote to me in answer to mine and I shall read my letter to him first...⁵

There are a number of letters which I have exchanged with Mr Mudgal. Perhaps it would be enough if I read the last two letters. I will first read my letter to Mr Mudgal dated the 27th May, which is the last one.⁶

I got this letter⁷ and later on June 2nd I sent a copy of this motion to him. In between, I might mention, he has written to me again asking for some copies of papers like the original report, and I supplied him with those copies.

We received these reports from a person, a reliable person, who normally has access to these papers in his official capacity. It is not some kind of a way of getting it—we got the information from a person who was present at the Directors' meeting in his official capacity. He reported this to us....

May I Sir, intervene?⁸ I have not had the least shadow of external pressure on me—in fact, I had not discussed this with anybody here except with my colleagues. There is no question of external pressure—I just do not understand what the honourable Member means by it....

I can either myself make an enquiry publicly or secretly in Bombay or elsewhere or come to the House for a formal enquiry rather than any kind of a secret enquiry which we may set going and then report to the House. That would not have been fair. I thought that the best course would be to place all the facts before the House and ask the House, if it so chose, to appoint a committee to go into the matter and either accept such explanation as Mr Mudgal might bring forward or...⁹

5. Malaviya interrupted by suggesting again that the Prime Minister might consider the feasibility of taking up that matter in a secret session of the House.

6. Not printed.

7. Mudgal replied on 28 May 1951 that Nehru's reference in his proposed motion to "canvassing support and making propaganda in Parliament on certain problems", was obviously based on allegations in paras 3 and 4 of his letter. He further mentioned that he had not met or negotiated with the Board or any Committee of the Board of Directors or the President of the Bombay Bullion Association to do any work for them in Parliament. So the question of having asked for Rs 20,000 or having negotiated for Rs 5,000 could not arise.

8. Mudgal was stating that he concluded from the talk going on in the House that a great deal of external pressure had been brought to bear on Nehru to bring that motion in that form.

9. The Special Committee set up on 8 June 1951 found Mudgal guilty and recommended on 24 September his expulsion from Parliament. Mudgal resigned on the same day and the House in an amended resolution passed on 25 September stated that he deserved expulsion.

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

IV. The Jeeps Case

1. The Jeeps Case¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: I thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to speak because this particular matter has raised a great deal of interest in the country and serious charges have been brought against the Government in regard to this.² When this matter came up before the House on the last occasion, the House postponed consideration of it so that it may have more time and the Defence Minister³ might give the facts of the case to the House. Whenever the House wants further information or is not content with the information that has been given, it is perfectly right for the House to enquire. The House has to be vigilant in such matters and for our part, Government welcomed this opportunity of looking into this matter further and to supply this information to the House. We have utilised this opportunity to pay a great deal of attention ourselves to it. And as you know, some honourable Members of this House have also had a chance of looking into this matter and we have profited a great deal by their suggestions and their observations to which we shall certainly pay a great deal of attention.

Kunzru: Who were the other Members?

JN: I do not know the names of some of them, but...

Kunzru: Who authorised them to undertake this work?

JN: As the honourable Member knows, he was himself invited by me and he refused to come. That is an attitude I entirely fail to understand.

Quite apart from this, I have often said it in the House and to honourable Members that whenever they have any enquiry to make, whenever they hear any complaint, it will be my privilege to help to find out what it is and any Member can come at any time subject, of course, to the time available at the time. Therefore whether it is this matter or any other, Government is anxious to pursue any complaint which has *prima facie* some substance in it.

In this particular matter a great deal has been said in the country and something was said in this House also and a certain word which is frequently

1. Reply to the debate in Parliament, New Delhi, 10 April 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol X, Part II, columns 6550-6553.
2. Hussain Imam stated that on every jeep India was losing about £ 164 and so wanted the matter to be examined by a Committee. Kamath wanted to know what the price was at the time that the new contract was negotiated and what the penalty clause in the new contract was for non-delivery or non-performance of the contract.
3. Baldev Singh.

used, has been used very often. That word is "scandal". Now, I can say more especially about one matter into which I have personally enquired as well as in regard to this jeep matter, having gone into it thoroughly I should like to state with such personal authority as I possess that the only scandal about this matter is the use of the word "scandal" all the time. The House will remember that this transaction took place two and a half years ago at a critical moment in the country's history. Those circumstances have to be remembered.⁴ It is not an easy matter to get military or other supplies quickly, more especially when there are all kinds of governmental and other difficulties in the way. It is true that when we examined these last papers, etc, two and a half years later we found many things in it which we would rather have had otherwise. We found certain non-compliance in certain things, in inspection, etc. These we found and we shall profit by this experience. But the point that the House is interested to know is whether there is anything which might be called corruption in it or even whether there is anything which may be called gross negligence in it. These are the important factors, and I can say with complete confidence that I have found not a trace of anything of that kind. I have found and others have found that there was delay and non-compliance and the inspection was not complete. Because of our need and because of the difficulties of the situation, we tried to find a way out of the difficulties and ultimately—and I want this to be made perfectly clear as it has been made clear—that we succeeded in finding a way out which involved no loss to the country. Mr Hussain Imam has stated and again repeated here that we have lost so much on every jeep. There has been no loss. Mr Kamath enquired how much is the price of a jeep here and abroad. I cannot exactly state the prices. But he will find at bottom of page 4 of the Defence Minister's note that the price of delivery in Bombay would be less than the Willys jeeps assembled at Bombay, allowing for customs duties and freights, etc. So there has been no loss in this transaction ultimately. This matter caused us a lot of worry and it has taken up a lot of our time, not only now but in the past. It has a long history of two and a half years. If I may repeat it, the House must remember the circumstances in which this was done.

Mr Hussain Imam said something about inspectors.⁵ When this contract originally came up before us, that was almost the first thing to be dealt with by us. Purchases up to that time were made through the India Office and the War Office of the United Kingdom, before the change-over took place. At

4. Early in 1948 it was found that India was short of jeeps. In June 1948 the Indian High Commissioner in Britain reported that an offer had been received for the supply of 2,000 reconditioned jeeps. A contract was signed with a British firm in March 1951.
5. Hussain Imam quoted from the Defence Minister's note to suggest that India did not have enough qualified persons to inspect the jeeps.

that time we had no corps of inspectors. Nobody can have a very large body of such persons and therefore we used some firms. We did not have them then in Delhi. We could have sent one or two only. So when we were asked to supply a large number of inspectors we could not do so and we had to take the help of a firm—Messrs Lloyds with a worldwide reputation. Whether they did the job well or not is another matter. As it happened they did not give satisfaction and that is perfectly true. Therefore ultimately we stopped that and found a way out.

Now, I submit that looking into the whole thing we have learnt many lessons from which we have profited and from which we will profit. There is absolutely nothing improper about it as was mentioned by some newspapers. Some newspapers of course who are bent that way take advantage of perhaps loose language used by some honourable Member or someone else and magnify it to a tremendous extent. Whether at the present moment or at any time, when a large quantity of defence materials has to be purchased, it is not an easy matter to get them on account of national and international difficulties. One has to take the circumstances as they are. One cannot proceed with these purchases in the same way as perhaps we might in normal times and in normal cases. Keeping that in view, I do submit to the House that this whole business, after close examination reveals nothing to which Government can take serious exception, except that we learnt from certain errors, certainly, nor would the House take exception. I would like to make it perfectly clear to the House and to the country that, having gone into this whole matter, we are completely satisfied and as I have said, in these circumstances no question arises of, shall I say, further enquiry. We have made enquiries enough and we do wish to take full advantage of what we have learnt from this not only in regard to future matters but even with regard to recent past matters. We have examined them thoroughly so that we may not have to face any like difficulties in the future.

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

V. Matters of Procedure

1. To Rajendra Prasad¹

New Delhi
2 March 1951

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Thank you for your long letter of the 2nd March. I am sorry that I have not been able, during the last few days, to have a talk with you. I hope that we shall have an opportunity fairly soon.

About elections, I entirely share your apprehension and I was considerably upset when I learnt that the Select Committee wanted another month's time.² I wrote immediately to Ambedkar and Satya Narayan Sinha and I pointed out to them that this kind of slow motion is most dangerous. In fact we have arranged that the Select Committee should meet from day to day now and that they should present the report long before the end of March. So far as I am concerned, I am determined that this Bill should pass Parliament during this session, even though we may have to prolong the session. I shall certainly give every priority to this Bill.

About the Grow-More-Food Campaign,³ I, in common with many of my colleagues, have been considerably worried. I have raised the question more or less in the form that you have raised in your letter in Cabinet.⁴ Before discussing it more fully, I decided that we must have some basic facts and I have called upon the Food Ministry to supply them. We have been functioning rather superficially, constantly occupied with the difficulties of the situation and not going back to these basic facts. I hope therefore to have a full discussion about it in Cabinet and in the Planning Commission. I shall be grateful to you if you could give us your advice as to what you think should be done.

Regarding the general situation,⁵ there is no doubt that it is bad. I feel that the additional taxation in our Budgets was desirable, although it must give a little shock to some people. As a matter of fact, almost every country

1. JN Collection.

2. If the Bill were not passed in that session, and the elections were postponed again, Prasad thought it would be disastrous for the country and would rouse much criticism.

3. Government decided not to import food after 31 March 1952 unless there was a grave emergency.

4. Rajendra Prasad wrote that he had the impression that the country as a whole and the Governments, particularly many of the State Governments, did not feel any great urgency regarding the Grow-More-Food Campaign.

5. Rajendra Prasad wrote that the country was facing acute scarcity of food and cloth, "discontent is growing and the Government is coming in for a great deal of criticism.... We have now got the budget also before Parliament with mounting taxes, rising prices....The position can well be imagined. I do not know if the additional taxation to the tune of 50 crores could have been avoided."

is faced with grave financial difficulties today and is taxing heavily for the purpose. It is this general situation that is all the time before the Planning Commission. I shall convey to Munshi and Mahtab what you have written.

I confess that I do not like the idea of your associating yourself with a spectacular opening of the Somnath temple. This is not merely visiting a temple, which can certainly be done by you or anyone else, but rather participating in a significant function which unfortunately has a number of implications.⁶ Personally, I thought that this was no time to lay stress on large-scale building operations at Somnath. This could have been done gradually and perhaps more effectively later. However, this has been done. I feel that it would be better if you did not preside over this function.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Rajendra Prasad wrote that he had been approached by the Jam Sahib of Navanagar to preside over a function in connection with the Somnath temple, built from public subscriptions. "I personally do not see any objection to associating myself with the function, particularly because I have never ceased visiting temples, and... denominational religious or semi-religious institutions...."

2. To P.Y. Deshpande¹

New Delhi
March 5, 1951

My dear Deshpande,²

Your letter of the 3rd March.³ I did not, either in my statement in Parliament⁴ or before the Party or elsewhere, challenge the right of any Member to address any communication to anyone he chooses without reference to a member of Government. I challenged the propriety of doing so, not the right. The propriety

1. File No 32(195)/49-PMS.
2. Deshpande; a Marathi novelist and Congressman.
3. Deshpande questioned Nehru's objection to a cable sent by 43 MPs to the United States Congress in regard to the legislation that was pending before the Congress for supplying foodgrains to India.
4. On 16 February 1951, Nehru expressed in Parliament considerable surprise at what the MPs had done and stated that although the Members of Parliament were free to express their views, sending direct messages to foreign Governments could only lead to confusion and embarrassment and was to be deprecated.

obviously depends upon the nature of the communication and the circumstances attending it.

I might inform you that my reaction to that message was shared by the Cabinet that morning, regardless of the particular views a person might hold. I am quite convinced that that message did us harm and if I had not made a statement immediately, the harm would have been greater. I would, in any event, have had to deal with it in public and, perhaps at greater length, later. By saying what I did right at the beginning, I stopped a lengthy argument both in India and abroad.

A foreign embassy has utilised that message, as well as other statements made, for large-scale propaganda in all countries.⁵ Our representatives abroad have drawn our attention to this propaganda which is obviously directed against the policy pursued by the Government of India.

No question arises about the Government being over the head of Parliament, as you say. It is obvious, however, that an individual or a group may make statements in public which have a vital significance. Therefore, it is always a question of judging a particular statement on merits and in regard to the circumstances then prevailing.

I made the statement in Parliament because something had to be said immediately as this matter had international complications. Otherwise, I would not have said anything in Parliament at all and contented myself by mentioning it in the Party.

So far as I am concerned, it did not strike me that you or any other person signing that message should leave the Party because of this. That is a matter for each individual to decide not because of my statement, but because of his fundamental opposition to something which he considers vital. As you must be aware, I have all along laid stress on the largest freedom of Party members.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Loy Henderson, the US Ambassador, said publicly that the US Embassy in New Delhi and the Consulates-General in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were convinced that India's appeal to the United States was fully justified.

MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION

I. The States

(i) Hyderabad

1. To N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar¹

New Delhi
March 18, 1951

My dear Gopalaswami,

The newspapers announce that the Supreme Court has dismissed the petitions of the Telengana people who were sentenced to death.² I do not know what is going to happen now. Presumably they will send a petition for mercy to the Nizam. Who advises the Nizam? I suppose the Hyderabad Government or the Home Minister there. Anyhow I feel that, in all the circumstances, the sentence of these people should be commuted to life imprisonment. That has been the long established tradition of Hyderabad and it is as well to respect that tradition. Apart from this, these cases have attracted a great deal of attention and I rather feel that it has been a pity that the appeals were dismissed on technical grounds and not on merits. Politically speaking, it seems unwise to allow a sentence of death to be carried out.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.
2. The Supreme Court, on 16 March 1951, by a unanimous decision dismissed the petitions filed under Article 32 and Article 136 of the Constitution on behalf of Janardana Reddi and 11 other communists of Telengana, who had been sentenced to death by the Special Tribunal at Nalgonda, and whose sentence and conviction had been confirmed by the Hyderabad High Court.

2. Political Prisoners and Detenus¹

I am forwarding a letter received from the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, Delhi, enclosing copies of some resolutions passed at their annual session recently held at Hyderabad.²

2. One of these resolutions deals with the political prisoners and detenus. I confess that I have long felt that we have kept many of the people far too

1. Note to Home Minister, 23 June 1951. JN Collection.
2. The seventeenth annual session of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind began at Hyderabad on 27 April 1951. The session, presided over by Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani, met for three days and was attended by over 500 delegates from all parts of the country.

long in prison or detention. Considering the nature of the Hyderabad conflict, the matter could have been viewed quite differently and dealt with differently. I know that thousands of people arrested previously have been subsequently screened and discharged, although even that took a great deal of time. Still numbers of them remain in detention. I do not think that their previous activities, that is before the change-over in Hyderabad, ought to be held against them after this long period, unless there are serious charges of murder and the like. To keep persons in detention or prison awaiting trial for years is not pleasant to contemplate. Whenever I have gone to Europe, this matter has been raised by all kinds of odd persons, sometimes unconnected with politics. The Red Cross Organisation in Geneva appealed to me earnestly about it over a year ago.

3. I wrote to Sardar Patel on this subject at that time and later.³ It is true that he told me that a more generous policy would be adopted and, as far as possible, people would be released. This was on the eve of his visit to Hyderabad.

4. I cannot naturally deal with individual cases, but I think the wider policy should be reviewed. The fact of long detention in prison is itself very important. It means a long sentence already undergone in circumstances which are sometimes worse than a prison sentence whose duration is known.

5. There are no doubt some people in Hyderabad opposed to such a policy. But it seems to me unbecoming for the Government of India to appear to be so ungenerous and revengeful. This certainly has a bad effect abroad.

6. Regarding the Osmania University, I have always attached a great deal of importance to it as a fine centre of education which should be encouraged. I think that it should be centrally controlled. There is no reason why its name should be changed. But I think that the Urdu language, in its simpler Hindustani version, should certainly continue there, together with Hindi and other languages.

7. The other main question relates to rehabilitation of Muslims displaced and persons retrenched from the Services, both civil and military. These have been brought to your notice previously.

3. See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 15 Part I, pp. 180-186.

MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION

I. The States

(ii) Assam

1. To Jairamdas Doulatram¹

New Delhi
May 9, 1951

My dear Jairamdas,²

Your letter of May 5th. I note that your Government has authorised Duncan,³ the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills District, to discuss with the Naga National Council a *via media*. I think that any such approaches should be welcomed.

I have had a feeling that this Naga question is much more a psychological one than a political one. The only effective approach to tribal people generally, and to the Nagas in particular, is the human and friendly approach. Of course, if they go beyond a certain limit, then inevitably one has to take some coercive measures. But such measures do not take us a long way anywhere. I would like to go far in winning the goodwill of the Nagas. It is important therefore what type of people approach them and whether they have that human approach or not. Your Adviser on tribal affairs, for instance, should have that human approach. Your other officers also should have the capacity to understand and be friendly with the people they deal with.

It is difficult for me to advise you from here. I am not particularly afraid of this proposed plebiscite.⁴ Nevertheless, it might lead to further complications and even trouble. Obviously, we should try to keep persons like Visar⁵ (ex-President of the NNC) and their partisans⁶ on our side.

Some people from Assam and elsewhere have even suggested my going to the Naga Hills. I do not think that would be advisable at the present juncture and, in any event, I just can't leave Delhi till this session of Parliament is over. After this rains will come in and make movement difficult. But, apart from this, I would like to visit these Naga Hills and meet the Nagas and talk

1. JN Collection. Extracts.

2. He was Governor of Assam at that time.

3. Simon Jenkins Duncan (b. 1897); joined Assam Civil Service (Junior), January 1922; promoted to Assam Civil Service (Senior), January 1927; attached to the Army and worked as Civil Intelligence Officer, 1944; Secretary, Finance and Revenue Department, Assam Government, 1946-49; Deputy Commissioner, Naga Hills, at this time.

4. The Naga National Council conducted a plebiscite throughout Nagaland in 1951 to ascertain the views of the people in regard to two basic issues: (i) whether they wanted to remain in India or to become a separate independent State, and (ii) to repudiate the charge of the Indian Government that Phizo and the NNC were supported by a small segment of the Naga people while the majority opted for joining the Indian Union.

5. The NNC, at its meeting from 16 to 18 February 1950 at Kohima, elected Visar Angami as President. He was a moderate and opposed to Phizo's extremist views.

6. By the end of December 1950 there was a rift among the leaders of the NNC over the demand for a separate independent State by Phizo.

to them face to face. I like these people and their spirit of independence. I should like to make friends with them and not enemies....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To J.N. Hazarika¹

New Delhi
May 13, 1951

My dear Hazarika,²

Your letter of April 27th about the Nagas.

I have been very anxious about the developments in the Naga Hills and have kept in constant touch with them through the Governor of Assam. I am fully aware of the seriousness of the problem. It is very delicate, because I feel that it cannot be dealt with simply by methods of repression. The Nagas are a brave people, well disciplined, and I like them. I think they deserve all our sympathy and at the same time we have to be firm with them. It is never an easy matter to combine these two approaches, but I have been trying to impress this upon the Assam Government and the Governor.

I might inform you that I sent word some months back that I shall gladly welcome any Naga leaders who wish to come to Delhi. I was prepared to meet even Phizo, who is giving so much trouble.

I agree with you that increased facilities should be extended to them in respect of transport, communications, education, etc.

I am afraid it is not possible for me to go to Kohima now or for some time. I cannot leave Delhi till this session of Parliament is over. I should like to go there, as I like that country and those people.

I do not like this plebiscite,³ but we need not attach too much importance to it. If we attach too much importance to it now, we shall have to attach importance to the result of it. I entirely agree with you that military or police action is to be avoided.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

2. (b. 1924); Member, Provisional Parliament, 1950-52; Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister in the Ministry of External Affairs from August 1952 to May 1962; Member, Lok Sabha, 1952-67.

3. See the preceding item.

3. To Jairamdas Doulatram¹

New Delhi
May 13, 1951

My dear Jairamdas,

A few days ago I received a letter from one of our MPs.² There is nothing very new in this. Nevertheless I am forwarding it to you.

I feel sure that this Naga question cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by military or police action. Of course, if we are driven to this, then there is no help. It is a question of psychological approach. It is therefore of the highest importance that the officers employed in the Naga Hills should have this psychological approach. How far this is so, I do not know. But I am informed that some of these officers are not very suitable from this point of view. I think this matter might be examined. It might be worthwhile to appoint some special officers who are acquainted with the Nagas and can be friendly with them.

Two officers were mentioned to me as suitable for this work. I do not know them at all, but am forwarding their names to you—Lakeshwar Sarma, who is now in Sadia and Satyam Borkatak, who is in the Lushai Hills.

Please do not take this as my recommendation, because I do not know them. I am merely passing the names on to you. It does seem important to me that both qualified officials and non-officials should go there and mix with the Nagas and make friends with them and thus try to influence them,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.
2. See the preceding item.

4. To Jairamdas Doulatram¹

New Delhi
May 14, 1951

My dear Jairamdas,

I have received today your long letter of May 11th and I greatly enjoyed reading it. I am indeed glad to find how friendly and human your approach

1. JN Collection.

has been to the Nagas and other tribal folk. I am quite convinced that this is the only way to deal with them and it is the right way.

You write to me about the two Naga parts, Eastern and Western, one part being directly under you and the other, the Naga Hills District, under the Assam Government. I suppose you could easily get over the difficulty and from the personal point of view keep in touch with both and see to it that the Assam Government more or less carries out a similar policy in their areas. Anyway, if you have any special suggestion to make about this matter, we shall gladly consider it. You should certainly remain in close touch with the Hills District.

I had a talk with Medhi² about the Nagas, but no special question was raised at the time. I repeated my general views and he appeared to agree.

I am so interested in these Nagas and especially their young folk that I would gladly send you some money to help individual cases, the kind of cases you have mentioned. In particular, I should like to help in their education. I am not talking about Government grants but rather smaller help from the Prime Minister's Fund which might be placed at your disposal for scholarships, etc.

Your letter is so good that I am sending it on to Sri Prakasa who will no doubt enjoy it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Bishnuram Medhi, at this time Chief Minister, Assam.

5. To Sri Prakasa¹

New Delhi
May 15, 1951

My dear Prakasa,²

I am returning the two letters you gave me.³ I have sent copies of them to Jairamdas. I think you might send brief replies to them. Tell Phizo that he is entirely mistaken if he thinks that the Nagas have not got any friends here.

1. JN Collection.
2. He was Minister of Natural Resources and Scientific Research at this time.
3. Letters from Athikho Daiho, a leader of the Naga Integration Committee of Manipur, and Phizo in which both had thanked Sri Prakasa for the care he had shown for the Naga people and feared trouble in the future when a voluntary plebiscite was held.

The Nagas are admired and it is our desire to help them in every way. Something on these lines you might write to him.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

6. To B. Das¹

New Delhi
May 19, 1951

My dear Das,²

I have already acknowledged your letter of the 8th May. I have again been considering it. There is, of course, a great deal in it with which I agree, more especially with what you say about the tribal areas of Assam. One difficulty about Assam has been that the Assam Government, consisting mainly of the plain people, have not paid much attention to the tribes and the tribal people rather suspect them. I have been writing to them repeatedly about this. The Governor, Shri Jairamdas Doulatram, I think appreciates this fully and he has gone all out, as his predecessor Sri Prakasaji did, to approach these tribes in a human and a friendly way.

Also, I am afraid, there are very few people amongst us who are prepared to devote themselves to tribal welfare as the Christian missionaries did. How are we to produce this mentality?

About Cooch-Bihar, the Home Minister, at that stage, could not be very specific and an enquiry was being held. As you know as a result of this enquiry, the district officers have been condemned. Cooch-Bihar is under the Bengal Government and we have to deal through them.

Long time ago I was of opinion that we should have a Minister of Social Services. But there is no point in having a Minister unless there is something to be done. Most of these social services are of provincial concern and it would be difficult for us to bypass States. There is, of course, the Finance Ministry to be consulted also at a time when every expansion is frowned upon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.
2. A prominent Congressman from Orissa and Member, Constituent Assembly; Chairman, Public Accounts Committee, 1950-54.

7. To Jairamdas Doulatram¹

New Delhi
May 22, 1951

My dear Jairamdas,

There has been some delay in answering your telegram No. 27 of May 18th. I was consulting the Finance Ministry about it. In this matter we have consulted Sri Prakasa also who gave us much valuable information.

The Finance Minister has agreed to a special grant of Rs 10 lakhs for beneficial activities in the Naga Hills. You can now proceed on this basis.

In dealing with these 10 lakhs, normally it would have been desirable to bring in the Naga National Council and have their cooperation and help. How far you are in a position to do so just at present, I do not know. In any event, Naga leaders, including the National Council people, should be brought into the picture. We need not stand on our prestige. We are big enough for that. We should try therefore to be generous and win over these people.

As regards compensation for war damages suffered by the Nagas, we hope to sanction Rs 30 lakhs. I believe this was the figure given by the Chief Minister of Assam. This sum also should be distributed in the manner suggested above for Rs 10 lakhs.

Could you let us know, if necessary after a reference to the Government of Assam, what is the position of the merchants who were ousted from Kohima and are now settled in Dimapur? I understand that these were Marwaris whom the Nagas dislike.

I should also like you to find out from the Government of Assam what their intention is in regard to Dimapur. I believe they intended to detach it from the Naga Hills and tack it on to Sibsagar District. Also what is the position in regard to the demand of the Nagas for a portion of a forest tract of Nowgong District as part of their Naga Hills?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

8. Telegram to Jairamdas Doulatram¹

Your telegram 27 of May 18th. I entirely agree with you that we should proceed cautiously with Phizo and Naga National Council and avoid repressive action as far as possible.

We are prepared to sanction special grant of Rs 10 lakhs for beneficial activities in Naga Hills. We hope to inform you soon about sanction for compensation for damages to be paid to Nagas. This is likely to be Rs 30 lakhs as suggested by your Chief Minister. This sum however should for present be kept confidential.

1. New Delhi, 23 May 1951. JN Collection.

9. To Bishnuram Medhi¹

New Delhi
May 25, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 18th May.

I am glad your Government is watching the Naga situation closely. I hope that in this matter you are maintaining close contact with the Governor who is not only partly responsible but is greatly interested.

I quite agree with you that any type of violence should be met and countered. Otherwise I feel that it would be far better not to use coercive methods. It is likely that if Government keeps its head cool and restrains its hand, the whole movement may gradually fizzle out, because it leads to nothing.

I do not think it is desirable for any specific proposals to be put forward on our own behalf. All we can do is to tell the Naga leaders that we are prepared to consider any proposals that they might make. We are not prepared to consider independence or anything like it....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection. Extracts.

10. To Jairamdas Doulatram¹

New Delhi
June 7, 1951

My dear Jairamdas,

I have your two letters, or rather three, of June 6th. One of these deals with the announcement you have made about war damage compensation and the development grant. I have nothing to say about this.

Your other two letters deal with the possibility of a settlement with the Nagas. You mention that your draft is a *via media* between the Nine-Point Agreement and the present Sixth Schedule. You do not give this draft and so I am unable to give any opinion about it. Generally speaking, I agree with your line of approach.

I continue to be of the opinion, which I have expressed previously, that any repressive action in regard to Zapu Phizo or others should only take place if there is violence or attempt at violence. His mere disagreement with any proposals which we might make should not be enough reason for trying to suppress him. If any adequate proposals are put forward for discussion and a section of the Nagas approve of them, we can consider the matter then. We might even, without coming to a formal agreement, go ahead with a certain programme.

But it is rather difficult for me to deal with this matter without having precise proposals. For the present, you might go ahead with your talks, but of course you should not finalise these things, as the Government of India is closely interested.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

11. To Jairamdas Doulatram¹

New Delhi
June 25, 1951

My dear Jairamdas,

... It is a good thing to discuss these matters with the Naga leaders, but it would be much safer for us not to make any specific proposals to Phizo, which

1. JN Collection. Extracts.

he might reject. The better approach would be to say that in our opinion there is no essential difference between the Hydari proposals² and the provisions of the Constitution. These latter provisions are capable of adjustment and elucidation to meet any doubts in the minds of the Nagas. If the Nagas think that there is some difference between the two, we shall gladly consider their viewpoint.

So far as the land question is concerned, as I have already informed you, we are perfectly prepared to make it quite clear that no acquisition or alienation of land in the Nagas territory will take place without the consent of the Nagas.

It seems to me that the Naga question has passed the critical stage. I am glad it has been wisely handled. If we had tried to suppress them, the consequences would have been much more troublesome. We should continue to follow this friendly and yet quietly firm policy.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Discussions were held at Kohima between the Nagas and Akbar Hydari, the then Governor of Assam, under the instructions of the Government of India, and a nine-point agreement was reached in June 1947, which came to be known as the Hydari Agreement. The last article of the agreement, which entrusted the Assam Government with a special responsibility to ensure the observance of the agreement for a period of ten years at the end of which the Naga Council could decide whether they wanted the same agreement to be further extended or a new agreement signed, was the main issue for the concerned parties.

MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION

I. The States

(iii) The Punjab

1. To Gopichand Bhargava¹

New Delhi
March 2, 1951

My dear Gopichandji,²

I wrote to you two or three days ago about various important matters and I have sent you a telegram about the Hansi incident which had disturbed me greatly. Tonight I had a long talk with Trivedi and discussed the Punjab situation with him. I might mention that I sent him a copy of my last letter to you, as I felt that he might be of some help.

I think it is necessary that we should meet sometime in the near future. I do not wish to call you here suddenly and to upset your programme. But we must meet sometime or other before very long and discuss the matters I have written to you about. I am much concerned with the situation in the Punjab³ and I have a feeling that it is drifting rather rapidly in the wrong direction. We cannot just wait and see it drift. We have to take some action. Nothing is worse than to watch helplessly and not to do something when such a situation arises.

I wrote to you in my last letter not only about the general situation but also about certain incidents which seemed to me to deserve immediate enquiry.⁴ I should like to know what steps you have taken in regard to them. It is not enough merely to refer it to some district official. Where Ministers are concerned, action has to be taken at a higher level and immediately.

Our Commonwealth Secretary, Dutt,⁵ visited Jullunder ten days ago in connection with the question of accommodation for the Pakistan Deputy High Commissioner. He reports to me that he found acute tension between the Hindus and Sikhs in some of the rural areas over the census enumeration. The victims are Harijans. Apparently great pressure was being brought to bear upon them by the Sikhs to describe their mother-tongue as Punjabi. Those who are daring

1. JN Collection.
2. He was at this time the Chief Minister of the Punjab.
3. The Akali Dal demanded a Punjabi-speaking State and the Hindu organisations reacted by appealing to the members of their community formally to disown the Punjabi language. Many Hindus in Punjab registered their language as Hindi in the census of 1951.
4. On 2 March 1951, a Harijan member said in the Punjab Assembly that, as a result of the controversy over recording in the language column during the census operations, houses of Harijans in some villages of Jalandhar district were besieged by armed groups of a predominant village community. He cited cases of bloodshed and said that some Harijan families had abandoned their villages due to persecution.
5. Subimal Dutt.

enough to describe as Hindi-speaking are being subjected to social pressure in the villages. He informs me that Sardar Amar Singh Dosanj issued open instructions to the Sikhs for a social boycott of Harijans who declared themselves as Hindi-speaking and this boycott had been effective over large areas. This is a very serious state of affairs and no Government should tolerate it. I understand further that the Commissioner of Jullunder Division⁶ asked for authority from your Government to take action against Sardar Amar Singh Dosanj, but that he had received no instructions.

This action of some Sikh leaders in regard to the Harijans and the language question is just the kind of thing which must be gripped at once, if the Government has to have any reputation. There is considerable feeling here about it too, since people read in the papers of a killing etc, in this connection. I have no doubt that it is Government's duty to take stern and immediate action against those Sikh leaders who have preached this social boycott of the Harijans.

Among the many problems of the Punjab that are troubling us, two facts stand out. One is the conflict between the Government and the State Congress. For the moment I need not go into the question as to whose fault this is. I am quite sure that Pratap Singh⁷ has acted wrongly in speaking as he has done. I have written to him about it and I am writing again. But that is a relatively minor issue concerning an individual. The main thing is that the gap between the Government and the State Congress widens. As I wrote to you previously, no Government can ultimately survive unless it has the support of the Congress. My own information is that the State Congress, in this matter at least, represents public feeling to a large extent. This is that public feeling is becoming more and more anti-Government in the Punjab. It does not much matter what the state of affairs in the Punjab Assembly is. What matters is the public at the back of it, more especially when elections are coming.

It is therefore of the highest importance that some way out should be found. A Congress broken up into factions will fail miserably during the elections to come and will deserve to fail. The support of other odd groups will not help it and indeed when Congress is weak itself, it will get nobody's support. The result will be the election of a large number of odd individuals or small groups, who have no principle or regular policy and who shift for themselves. That will be the collapse of stable government or any Government in the Punjab and other serious consequences will flow. So, quite apart from my desire that the Congress should hold together, I feel the Punjab itself will not hold together unless some steps are taken to prevent the present drift.

6. J.M. Srinagesh.

7. Pratap Singh Kairon was at this time President, Punjab State Congress. He later became Chief Minister.

The second point is the place of Giani Kartar Singh in your Ministry.⁸ Nobody can be enamoured of Gianiji or have any respect for him after his past or even present record. He may become a balancing factor because he commands a few votes. But he is a grave liability at any time and more especially when elections are coming, I feel more and more that his presence in the Ministry is the chief cause of your Ministry's growing unpopularity with the Congress and the public. Indeed I imagine that your position would be much stronger with public and certainly with the Congress but for Giani. No one can possibly rely upon him for anything at any time and he would play his own game. To allow him to do so at a critical moment might well upset the applecart completely. We have to look ahead a little and not allow ourselves to be entangled in the present.

Your Governor⁹ was telling me that if existing conditions continue, there is likely to be large-scale bloodshed during the elections. Giani Kartar Singh's presence as a Minister is likely to be an additional factor in creating trouble.

If my analysis is correct, then it is high time that we did something about it. There is a general impression that Kartar Singh is acting continuously in an unscrupulous way and getting away with it. All kinds of persons have told me that they would gladly trust you, but they are not prepared to trust Kartar Singh and that you do not or cannot control him. I want you to consider all these matters carefully so that when we meet, we might be able to chalk out some line of future action. Even before that, I would like you to write to me about the various questions I have referred to.

I would strongly urge you to take swift action in Jullunder against those Sikh leaders who are calling for boycott of Harijans.

There is one other matter I might mention, which took place sometime ago. I do not think that Prithvi Singh Azad had fair treatment at your hands when a number of portfolios were taken away from him. Probably he has little work to do now and he is kept there for form's sake.

I am writing to Pratap Singh also and telling him that it is highly improper for him to speak in the manner he has done in various places. I think you should see him yourself and have a good talk with him. I have also suggested to the Governor to see him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. Giani Kartar Singh wielded a considerable influence in the Ministry of Gopichand Bhargava who depended for his Ministry's survival on Giani Kartar Singh's group which itself was a break-away faction of the Akali Dal.

9. C.M. Trivedi.

2. To Udham Singh Nagoke¹

New Delhi

March 10, 1951

My dear Sardar Udham Singh,²

I have received your letter of the 6th March about the census operations in the Punjab and the Pepsu. I am receiving a large number of complaints about this and have been greatly distressed about them. You mention in your letter that pressure is being exercised on people to declare their mother-tongue as Hindi. On the other hand, I have also received reports to the effect that great pressure is exercised on people to declare their mother-tongue as Punjabi, even though they do not want to do so. Further that social boycotts have been proclaimed to bring such pressure to bear, more especially on Harijans. Indeed the reports of the Harijans that I have received both from the Punjab and the Pepsu have disclosed an extraordinary state of affairs. Lawlessness is also increasing in these areas. The other day the Home Minister made a brief statement in Parliament on this subject.³

Without going into the merits of this question, it is clear to me that any information given in the census in regard to this matter in present conditions is of no value and cannot be relied upon. Our Home Minister practically made this clear and it can be made still more clear.

Your letter seems to indicate that all the fault lies on one side. In the same way many other letters and complaints to me state that all the fault lies on the other side. I have little doubt that both parties are in error and are acting wrongly.

I am drawing the attention of the Home Minister and the States Minister to what you have written and to what others have written to me on this subject. I think that it should be made perfectly clear that any census given in the Punjab and in the Pepsu on the language and script questions will not be considered to have any value.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No 2(567)/51-PMS.
2. A pro-Congress Akali; President, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar.
3. Rajagopalachari stated in Parliament on 8 March 1951 that on the eve of the census, in the Punjab and Pepsu areas, a section of the Hindus asked people to return Hindi instead of Punjabi as their mother-tongue and this had caused resentment among the Sikhs. Consequently some disturbance took place in a village in Jalandhar and one person was murdered. It was also reported that strong pressure had been put on sections of the Scheduled Castes, who had regarded themselves as Hindus, to return themselves as Sikhs. As a result, they moved out to neighbouring towns and villages.

3. Declaration of Language for the Census¹

... Question: In view of the recent disturbances in the country on the census issue, will the Government of India consider advising the Punjab Government to give up its policy of forcing on one community the language of another?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Home Minister has already made a statement about that. And so far as the census is concerned, it does not matter what people put down in regard to language because it is not going to count at all. Conditions are not quite normal, people are not declaring their language quite freely, therefore, we do not propose to consider that column at all. I agree that there should be no question of forcing....

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 13 March 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 67-69, 103, 153, 355-356, 361-366, 443-445, 482-484, 502-505.

4. To Udham Singh Nagoke¹

New Delhi
March 18, 1951

My dear Sardar Udham Singh,

Thank you for your letter of March 16th. As I wrote to you, I have received a very large number of complaints from Harijans. The Harijan Sevak Sangh has sent me a report. We had also sent our Commissioner² for Scheduled Tribes and Castes and he has also reported. There can be little doubt that large numbers of Harijans have most unfortunately suffered greatly because of this census and language controversy. I do not myself understand why people should get excited about this matter. A declaration in the census does not make the slightest difference, even if it is wrong. It does not and should not lead to political consequences, and, so far as we are concerned, we are not going to accept as valid the result of this census in the Punjab, so far as language is concerned.

This was eminently a question for reasonable consideration and discussion. As soon as pressure tactics are adopted by either party, the question is taken away from the logical plane to some other plane.

1. File No 2(567)/51-PMS.
2. L.M. Shrikant.

Of course, the census is a record of facts. But, in recording facts, the Census Commissioner³ has to accept, I suppose, a person's own declaration. Difficulties come in where the boundaries are vague or where some kind of vested interests are involved which affect the factual report.

We are perfectly prepared to take such action as we can to stop these pressure tactics and, more especially, to stop any criminal behaviour in this respect. I do not know what kind of an inquiry you suggest. In present circumstances, this will probably create more passion. We have had some private inquiries already. Action can normally only be taken in regard to specific and obvious cases. I would gladly consider any suggestion you make to remove the bitterness that has grown.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. R.A. Gopalaswamy.

5. The Situation in the Punjab¹

In considering the situation in the Punjab, the following matters have to be kept in view:-

- (1) Administrative efficiency and integrity;
- (2) As large a measure of cooperation as possible between the Government and the Congress element;
- (3) The communal situation.

2. It appears clear that there has been a deterioration in all these matters lately. It is true that the aggravation of the communal situation, which was caused by the language issue, has somewhat lessened. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of communal friction. The law and order situation is not good and the basic fact remains that the Provincial Congress as constituted is opposed to the Ministry as constituted.

3. To continue the Ministry exactly as it appears is undesirable and likely to petrify the present unsatisfactory position and even perhaps to tend to make it grow worse. Therefore, some steps should be taken to change this. The other extreme is to have no Ministry and have Governor's rule in a state of emergency. That extreme has also to be avoided as far as possible.

4. Therefore, the only feasible way of approach at present appears to be a reconstruction of the Ministry; the leadership of the party and the Ministry to remain with Dr Gopichand. In this reconstruction some facts have to be borne in mind:-

1. Note, 11 April 1951. AICC Papers, NMML.

- (1) An attempt to lessen the gap between the Congress organisation and the Ministry by association of representative Congressmen of the majority group with the Ministry;
- (2) The two Sikh groups, namely Giani Kartar Singh's and Nagoke group, should continue to be associated with the Ministry.² It is desirable for every group to lose its group identity as far as possible and to function in the party and the Ministry as individuals. An attempt should be made to bring about communal harmony between the Sikhs and the Hindus in the province. The method of representation should be a matter for mutual consultation.

5. The Ministry so formed should function as a team and there should be no public criticism or public differences of opinion. Any important matter in which there is a difference of opinion should be referred to the Parliamentary Board or to such members of it as happen to be in Delhi.

6. There are some important matters of policy which had been decided upon by the State Government, but which have been criticized in public, for instance, enhancement of canal dues and betterment of values. These decisions should stand. Any variation suggested should be referred, if necessary, to the Parliamentary Board.

2. Towards the middle of December 1950, Amritsar was the scene of two rival conventions, one sponsored by the nationalist Sikhs and the other by the Akali Dal. The lead in calling the "All-India Congress Sikh Convention" was taken by Pratap Singh Kairon. Among those who attended the Congress convention was Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke. The rival Panthic convention reiterated the demand for a Punjabi-speaking State.

6. To B.R. Ambedkar¹

New Delhi
April 16, 1951

My dear Ambedkar,

I was surprised to read the report of your speech delivered yesterday² in which you stated that the present Government had done very little or nothing for the

1. JN Collection.

2. At a meeting of the Delhi Scheduled Castes Welfare Association to celebrate his fifty-ninth birthday as well as to lay the foundation-stone of Ambedkar Bhawan, Ambedkar said that the country had achieved independence but the depressed classes were not free and that their condition became worse under the existing Government than what it was under the British. He was not hopeful that the depressed classes would attain their emancipation in the near future and advised them to unite and achieve their liberation themselves.

Scheduled Classes and in fact the British Government had done more for them. The only instance you gave, as far as I could make out, was the recent incidents in some parts of the Punjab and Pepsu. These incidents unfortunately are true. But surely they have nothing to do with the policy of the Central Government or what we have done. It is odd enough for a Minister to run down the Government. But in addition to that, I do not think you have been fair or factually correct. I should have thought that this Government has been very much alive to this problem and that the State Governments also have functioned in this way. Perhaps they have not done as much as they should have done. But the fact that progress has been made is undoubted—far greater progress than in previous times.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Udham Singh Nagoke¹

New Delhi
May 13, 1951

Dear Sardar Udham Singh,

Thank you for your letter of the 10th May, which I have read with interest.

I am afraid, the state of affairs in the Punjab is unfortunately deteriorating and there is no sense of discipline or of cooperative effort visible there. Some rather radical steps will have to be taken to meet this situation.

The question of language is really not a difficult one. Such questions cannot be solved by compulsion. Obviously the language that the people want must prevail. The present conflict between Punjabi and Hindi is rather artificial. The language of the Punjab, generally speaking, in the past has certainly been Punjabi, insofar as it is spoken. The script was in the past the Urdu script, although Gurmukhi and Hindi scripts were also used.

All these matters can be settled without much difficulty in a peaceful atmosphere. Difficulties are created not by the problem but by the manner of approach to them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

8. To Purushottamdas Tandon¹

New Delhi
June 13, 1951

My dear Purushottamdas,²

I enclose a note of my conversation with Governor Trivedi of the East Punjab.

I am afraid Dr Gopichand is again being led astray by some of his colleagues and advisers.³ The practice, which has become rather usual in the Punjab Ministry and Party, is being adopted of delaying matters and playing for time by asking for reconsideration. I do not see why he should consult his party in this matter when a directive is sent by you. Of course, it would have been courteous to inform the Party.

I think it might be worthwhile for you to telephone to Dr Gopichand and tell him that there should be no delay in his carrying out the directive and that the Parliamentary Board is not prepared to reconsider the matter.

So far as I know, Pratap Singh and Sachar are certainly not going to adopt the line that Gopichand has suggested.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. AICC Papers, NMML.
2. Tandon was at this time the Congress President.
3. On 11 June 1951 the Parliamentary Board decided that Bhargava should resign, and that, in order to prevent internal conflicts in the Congress Party before the forthcoming general elections, no Congress Government should function in East Punjab until the elections were over. Bhargava defied its decisions. After discussions with his colleagues and supporters, he ultimately tendered his resignation on 16 June 1951. Governor's rule was announced four days later.

9. To Rajendra Prasad¹

New Delhi
June 15, 1951

My dear Mr President,

As you know, the Punjab has faced some kind of a crisis for some time past.² The Ministry had a bare majority and in the past some of the persons forming

1. File No 235/51, President's Secretariat.
2. The crisis had continued for ten weeks.

this majority have voted against it. A large number of members of the Party supporting the Ministry are opposed to it and have openly expressed their opposition in public. This has created a situation which makes the effective working of Government difficult. Most of the time of the Ministers and those opposed to them has been spent in activities aimed at against each other. The work of the Government has suffered greatly and the Governor reports that there has been a marked deterioration. The law and order position is not satisfactory.

In view of all these circumstances, attempts were made repeatedly by the Congress Parliamentary Board to bring about some kind of a settlement between the rival groups so that a stable and efficient Ministry might function under the leadership of Dr Gopichand, the present Chief Minister.³ These attempts, which lasted more than two months, having failed, the Congress Parliamentary Board called upon Dr Gopichand to resign and further directed that no Congress Ministry should be formed. This directive was communicated to Dr Gopichand Bhargava.

As soon as I learnt of it, I informed the Governor of possible developments so that he might be prepared for them. I do not yet know whether Dr Gopichand is going to resign or not. It seems to me, however, that, in the circumstances now existing, it is not possible for Dr Gopichand to continue as Chief Minister and further that no other stable Ministry can be formed. It is possible that fresh developments might take place by tomorrow. As I am going away early tomorrow morning to Nepal and Bihar, I am writing this letter to you to keep you informed.

The probability is that on the resignation of Dr Gopichand Bhargava the Governor will find it difficult to form a Ministry which commands a majority in the Assembly. He may ask Dr Gopichand's advice as to whether he can suggest any other person who could be sent for to form a Ministry. He might consult some other leading members of the Assembly. It is highly unlikely, however, that any person, who can command a majority, will be agreeable to form a Ministry. A situation will then arise in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution

3. The dissident group accused the Ministry of inefficiency, corruption, nepotism and communal tension. A vote of no-confidence was moved in the Assembly by the Congress Party on 3 April 1951 by Kairon, but was defeated by 35 votes to 31. The Parliamentary Board, thereupon, directed Bhargava on 11 April to reshuffle his Cabinet. A subsequent proposal that the Assembly Party should submit ten names, from which the Board would select a Cabinet of six, was rejected by 38 votes to 24 on 12 May. On 22 May the Board selected five names leaving the choice of the sixth minister to Bhargava, who, however, informed the Board that he was unable to accept that list.

and the Governor may report to you accordingly. Article 356 of the Constitution⁴ will then apply and it will become necessary for you, as President, to issue a Proclamation.

In view of these possible developments, I am asking the Home Minister to work out in his Ministry the necessary steps that may have to be taken for action under Article 356. If action is necessary in my absence from Delhi, the Home Minister will immediately get in touch with you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. According to Article 356 of the Constitution, if the President on receipt of a report from the Governor of a State or otherwise is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the President may by Proclamation, a) assume to himself all or any of the functions of the Government of the State; b) declare that powers of the Legislature of the State shall be exercisable by or under the authority of Parliament; c) make such provisions as appear to the President necessary for giving effect to the objects of the Proclamation.

10. To Rajendra Prasad¹

New Delhi
June 21, 1951

My dear Mr President,

Your letter of the 18th June regarding the new developments in the Punjab, reached me in Patna on my arrival there yesterday.² I hope to meet you soon and discuss this matter with you. As you know, I have kept you informed of the major developments in the Punjab, which have ultimately led to the present situation. I do not remember that, in the course of these conversations, you expressed any intense dislike to what has taken place.

I fully appreciate that any suspension of the normal working of the Constitution in a State must necessarily be distasteful to you, as it is to all of

1. JN Collection.

2. In his letter, Rajendra Prasad wrote that he approved a Proclamation for the Punjab, although he "intensely disliked suspending the normal working of the Constitution" and "assuming to myself the functions of the State Government", and added that "such a situation is bad enough in all circumstances, but the way the emergency has been brought about makes it much worse."

us.³ It was because of this inherent dislike that we tried to avoid such a step. For nearly three months we discussed this matter not only amongst ourselves but with the Governor and the Chief Minister. We tried our best to avoid such a contingency and explored every other avenue. When we are convinced that the situation in the Punjab was deteriorating with rapidity, we felt that some step had to be taken.

There are two aspects to this matter. One relates to the activities of the Parliamentary Board and the other, the governmental aspect, relates to the Governor, the Prime Minister and the President. So far as the latter aspect is concerned, it was clear that we had no choice in the matter. So far as the Parliamentary Board aspect is concerned, it is not only something outside the Constitution, but it cannot be controlled by Government as such. My responsibility as a member of the Parliamentary Board is somewhat apart from that of Prime Minister. It is possible to say that the Parliamentary Board acted unwisely. You have however raised a somewhat different point also, namely an outside organisation interfering with the working of the Constitution.⁴ It seems to me that if we have any Party system, it is inevitable for that Party to issue directives to its members. Those directives may be right or wrong. But if it is to function as a disciplined party, the right to issue a directive must appertain to it.

The Parliamentary Board was chiefly concerned with the steadily deteriorating situation in the Punjab and the fact that the Ministry, though it commanded a rather uncertain majority in the Assembly, was losing all contacts with the public. The public means not only the Congress organisation but others. The Ministry thus was increasingly becoming a private preserve, supported by a number of people who had also some kind of a vested interest in the Ministry continuing. Meanwhile the law and order situation as well as the communal situation was becoming bad and threatened to become dangerously bad. The services were rapidly deteriorating and the best officers wanted to leave the Punjab and serve elsewhere. The Governor repeatedly brought this to our notice. The Ministry was supposed to be a Congress Ministry. In effect it was being controlled more and more by non-Congress elements. Its majority also was rather artificial, and depended largely on the Congress Party supporting it as a whole in face of the other opposition in the Assembly. On several occasions the majority in the Assembly would have outvoted the Ministry but for the fact that the Members of the Congress Party were not allowed to do so.

3. He was of the opinion that the Ministry had been functioning and the Chief Minister had not tendered his resignation because he had lost the confidence of the Assembly but only because of a directive of the Congress Parliamentary Board.
4. Rajendra Prasad considered it wholly wrong to "permit any interference by an authority which was unknown to the Constitution" in the normal working of the Constitution.

As a result of all this, the functioning of the Ministry became less and less and hardly any work was done, as all the Ministers were busy in other activities. The chief interest of the Ministers in the work of Government became one of making appointments or giving contracts which were meant to strengthen their group position and which were bitterly criticised in the public.

In view of all these circumstances, the Parliamentary Board considered it essential that some kind of a broader based Ministry was desirable. Efforts to this end however failed chiefly because the Chief Minister did not cooperate with them. The Chief Minister in fact became merely a nominal leader of the Party, which he could not control or influence much. The choice before us was to allow the situation to deteriorate till it became even worse than it was or to check this process before it went too far and became uncontrollable. There was grave danger of the latter happening. It was in these circumstances that we asked the Chief Minister to resign. You have mentioned that the Punjab Hindu Mahasabha has expressed its approval of the action taken. I might mention that such approval has come from a variety of organisations and individuals who count, quite apart from the official Congress organisation.

You refer to an outside authority trying to control the Ministry and compare this to the issue raised by Acharya Kripalani's action in resigning from the Presidentship of the Congress.⁵ I do not think that the two cases are at all comparable. The question about the water rates etc, did not arise at all in this connection.⁶ We had made that clear from the very beginning. Nor was there any question of an outside authority controlling the Ministry. The question was rather of the Ministry being changed because of various factors and because it was stated that it had ceased to represent any large body of public opinion in the Punjab and could not control the situation.

After many months of negotiation and consultation, we came definitely to the conclusion that the Chief Minister was not only not capable of dealing with the situation but was also not acting in a straight manner. Two of his colleagues had been openly charged with corruption and we had suggested to him to remove them from the Ministry. He was not agreeable to doing this

5. He enquired whether the Ministry was to be guided and controlled constitutionally by the Assembly which had been duly elected and authorized under the Constitution to guide and control it or by an outside authority which was not recognized by the Constitution and was wholly foreign to it. He added that Kripalani resigned his Presidentship of the Congress in 1947 because he wanted to control the working of the Central Ministry irrespective of the Assembly and the Ministry had not been prepared to concede that.
6. He wrote that the Governor as also the Ministry were keen on enhancing the water rate to enable the budget demands to be met and to finance the Bhakra project, charge a betterment fee on land benefited by it.

because his majority in the Assembly apparently was dependent on various odd groups supporting him by their votes. At no time was it our intention to have what might be called a heterogeneous Ministry to function. In fact we considered that the then existing Ministry was rather a mixed and heterogeneous one and we wanted more team work. A Ministry entirely chosen from one Party cannot be called heterogeneous, though it might consist of some elements which did not wholly fit in with each other. The objective before us was to select a Ministry in full consultation with the Chief Minister and to press upon it that it should work as a team.

There is no reason why the present arrangement should continue indefinitely. If it results in producing conditions which can facilitate the working of a homogeneous Ministry with contacts with the people, we can always revert to that.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Kailas Nath Katju¹

New Delhi
June 24, 1951

My dear Kailas Nath,²

Thank you for your letter of the 21st. You have written to me after such a long time that I feel I must reply to you.

What has happened in the Punjab is most distressing. It can be criticized in many ways, and yet I am convinced that the situation was deteriorating so fast that a shock was needed. The question was not one of an outside authority trying to exercise control but rather of a fairly rapid disintegration all over the Punjab because of various reasons.

Of course nothing can come out at the AICC from a desultory discussion. One has to put forward some definite ideas and then discuss them.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. JN Collection.

2. Katju was at this time the Governor of West Bengal.

12. To Chandulal Trivedi¹

New Delhi
June 24, 1951

My dear Trivedi,

Before going to Kashmir² where I am cutting myself off for a few days from the world, I want to send you my good wishes in the heavy tasks you have been charged with. I am quite sure that there will be rapid improvement in the Punjab. I hope you will particularly try to clean up much of the irregular and improper things that had been done previously. I hope also that there will be a toning down of the communal atmosphere.

I have little doubt that gradually there will be changes in the old Party alignments in the Punjab and possibly new groups might arise. If that happens, it will be a good development, as it will at any rate take Punjab politics out to some extent of the ruts in which they were.

I heard an odd story the other day. Some of the MLAs were much put out by the stoppage of their monthly allowances and threatened to leave their particular group, whereupon, it is said, that some assurance was given to them that this allowance would be paid to them privately and in fact some payment was made. The story is that this took place at Gurgaon. Of course I cannot vouch for it, but it came from a fairly reliable source.

I have passed on your letter about the legislation to our Law Ministry. Please ask your law people to get in touch with them direct and send for particulars.

I think we need not appoint any advisers, official or non-official, for the present.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

2. Nehru was in Srinagar from 26 June to 4 July 1951.

13. To Chandulal Trivedi¹

New Delhi
June 24, 1951

My dear Trivedi,

On my return to Delhi, I received a bunch of letters from you—one dated June 16th, two dated June 17th and three dated June 20th.

1. JN Collection.

I think it is certainly possible to criticise, from the democratic point of view, the action that we have taken in the Punjab. At the same time I am convinced that this action was necessary in order to stop the progressive rot that was setting in and to give the province and its people a shock. As you know, we tried our hardest to find some way out. We were convinced that merely to continue things as they were was to continue the process of deterioration.

I am sure that administratively there will be a marked improvement now and that there will be greater discipline and less communalism.

You refer in one of your letters of June 20th to the payment of salaries and allowances to the Speaker and the Members. I am inclined to agree with you. I am sending your letter to the Home Ministry.

About legislation for the Punjab, I am anxious that your important Bills should be passed here. But the amount of work that faces us in the next session is formidable indeed and I do not see how we can get through it within a few weeks. However, I am communicating with the Law Ministry and sending your letter to them.

I feel dead tired. I am going to Kashmir for a week on the 26th of this month. I shall proceed to some isolated mountain where nobody can approach me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Gopichand Bhargava¹

Camp Pahalgam
June 29, 1951

My dear Gopichandji,

Your letter of June 26 has reached me here at Pahalgam this evening.²

It is not correct to say that I sent you a directive through the Congress President. The directive was that of the Parliamentary Board. Indeed I was not present when the actual directive was framed or passed, as you will, no doubt,

1. JN Collection.

2. Gopichand Bhargava wrote that he tendered his resignation from the Chief Ministership in accordance with the instructions of the Central Parliamentary Board. Although he had received Nehru's directive regarding it through the Congress President on telephone earlier i.e., on 12 June 1951, he had not resigned then because the message communicated on the telephone was not a detailed one.

have noticed. Before that I was present at the meeting of the Parliamentary Board and I expressed my great regret at the manner the Parliamentary Board has been treated by you. I pointed out that it is better for the Parliamentary Board not to function at all, if its advice or recommendations were not acted upon. I then had to leave the meeting because of an important engagement. It was later in the evening that I received the Parliamentary Board's decision. This does not mean that I do not agree with that decision. I only wish to point out that your idea that I sent you a directive is not correct.

It is not my wish that you should resign from the Assembly or the Congress. It is true that I have been deeply dissatisfied with events in the Punjab, and more especially with the way our advice has been repeatedly flouted or bypassed by your group. I became convinced that the situation in the Punjab, bad as it was, would deteriorate rapidly. It was not with a view to elections that I thought some effective step was necessary. It is quite possible that step may not be very beneficial from the point of view of elections. But from the point of view of the Punjab it seemed to me essential that existing conditions should not continue. I think I made that clear to you right from the beginning and, therefore, we wanted some change. You were not agreeable to the advice we offered.

It is very good of you to say that you look to me for advice.³ I confess that I was not aware of this; nor did the developments which have taken place convey this impression to me. I shall gladly give you such advice as seems to me to be right whenever occasion offers itself.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Bhargava felt that certain wrong impressions about him had been created in Nehru's mind. He mentioned that he "had tried to follow Gandhiji implicitly and Sardar Patel faithfully, and after their demise" he had been looking to Nehru in their place.

MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION**I. The States****(iv) Rajasthan**

1. To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai¹

New Delhi
March 6, 1951

My dear Rafi,²

Your letter of today's date about Rajasthan.³ I must confess that I am feeling less and less confidence in the Congressmen of Rajasthan. The situation is a difficult one and all of us have to function according to our lights. We want naturally a Congress Ministry to function and we want that Ministry to be a success. We want, therefore, to take all steps, insofar as possible, to ensure that success. Ultimately, success or failure depends upon a large number of factors, chiefly human factors. Unfortunately the human material we have anywhere is far from good. Therefore one has to balance all factors before coming to a decision. The mere fact that the situation in Rajasthan is bad and drifting is certainly a reason to give it the most earnest thought and to take steps to check this drift. But nothing is worse than to rush into some action without adequate thought. That can only make the drift worse.

What surprises me is that Jainarain Vyas⁴ and his friends deliberately keep away from me. Are they afraid of me? They rush up to you and give you their version of certain facts and you accept it wholly and perhaps give them the impression that they are acting quite correctly. I do not think they are acting correctly in this matter, although I agree with many of the points they have raised. After all, we all know each other fairly well and I have known the States People's Congress rather well for at least fifteen years. I have no doubt that Gopalaswami wants to help them. But their behaviour is occasionally peculiar and they seem to suspect everybody. The result is that I lose confidence in them. Here is a matter which should be dealt with directly and frankly. They prefer round-about and devious methods.

It was my express suggestion both to Gopalaswami and to some of Vyas's colleagues (Vyas is not anywhere near me) that it would be desirable to include in the Ministry some notable and capable outsiders.⁵ This would give a broader basis and create a better psychological impression. I had suggested that if possible two such persons should be included, apart from a representative of the Hiralal Shastri group and one of Jagirdars. All this was subject to two

1. JN Collection.
2. He was at this time the Union Minister in charge of Communications.
3. Kidwai wrote that it was necessary to check the drift in Rajasthan affairs.
4. He was at this time the Chief Minister of Rajasthan.
5. Kidwai wrote that there were rumours of non-Congressmen and the ex-rulers being sounded about the inclusion of representatives of jagirdars and independents in the Cabinet. Vyas had agreed to include a jagirdar and also an independent, who, he hoped, would cooperate with him and not join the Cabinet to sabotage it.

conditions: that the persons chosen should be relatively competent and able and that they should pull on and cooperate with the Ministry. It is absurd to have a person in the Ministry who does not cooperate, whoever he might be.

These are the basic approaches and the only thing that remains is to discuss these matters in a friendly way with Gopalaswami. I see nothing wrong about Gopalaswami asking Vyas to meet the Rajpramukh. Nor is there any question of playing into the hands of officers, experienced or other.⁶ It is time however that Vyas and company played a straight game. The responsibility for Rajasthan is at least as much ours, in fact more at present, than that of any Ministry that might be formed there. This fact must be realised. We cannot change the whole structure of the Government of India, as at present existing, because Vyas does not like it. But we can make it function in a way that is better. It is obvious that if Vyas is responsible for a Ministry, it should be such as can make a team and not just odd elements put together.

In the event of any of the Rajasthan people coming to you again, will you please tell them that I am a little tired of their ways and my enthusiasm for them is waning? I have at least as much desire for the Congress to function in Rajasthan as they can have. I may not know about the internal affairs of Rajasthan as much as they do, but I have some experience on a wider scale both of human beings and affairs, which is far greater than theirs.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

6. Kidwai wrote: "It is time we should cease to play in the hands of our "experienced" officers.... Why it should be persisted in? The conditions in Rajasthan are bad."

MATTERS OF ADMINISTRATION

II. General

1. To C. Rajagopalachari¹

New Delhi

1 March 1951

My dear Rajaji,

The President has referred the case of Jagdeo Mahto to me. In this case you advised the President that the petition for clemency should be rejected and the accused should suffer the extreme penalty of the law. Thereupon the President wrote a long note dated 19th February, expressing his opinion that this was a case fit for commutation of the sentence of death. He sent the file back to you in the hope that you would reconsider your previous advice in the matter. You were however again of opinion that there should be no commutation of the sentence in this case.

The President has adhered to his previous opinion and has sent on the file to me. It is not usual to do so. Presumably the President did so because, on a close consideration of the case, he feels strongly on the subject.

My own reaction normally would be that if the President is strongly in favour of clemency in a case, I would accept his view. Or rather I would not come in the way of clemency. It is true that in this, as in other matters, the President should constitutionally act on the advice of the Minister. Nevertheless, in a matter of clemency, a certain latitude should be allowed to the Head of the State. I think that much is due to his position. If such a clemency had certain far-reaching political consequences, then the question might be viewed differently.

Sometime back there was a rule that mercy petitions should be considered by the Home Minister, the Law Minister and the Prime Minister. I think you were Governor-General then. For my own guidance I adopted a practice, which I stated in writing previously, that in the event of either the Home Minister or the Law Minister being in favour of commutation, I would support commutation. That is, if even one Minister thought so, that appeared to me an adequate reason for commutation to be agreed upon. Applying that rule now, I would have to come to the conclusion that in this particular case, when the President is so strongly of opinion in favour of commutation, his view should prevail.

Looking at such cases from the social point of view there is very little difference between a death sentence and a life imprisonment. Society has been avenged and is protected from possible future misdeeds of that particular person. The only question is one of delicate balance of what should be done in a particular case.

The facts might be admitted. There is no doubt that there was a brutal murder and that the accused gave the initial and perhaps fatal blow. But it does seem to me a major fact that a large crowd, consisting of most people in the village, was pursuing the victim and assisting, in some way or other, in this murder. It is obvious that high passions were excited not of an individual but of the village. The victim was evidently a man who was bitterly disliked by the village. This raises the case to a somewhat higher level than that of an individual murder. Unfortunately passions are roused in disputes relating to property and especially land. People get excited and commit evil deeds in a moment of passion. Normally one would not consider such a murder as a premeditated one or the act of a man who was essentially evil. From a rather large experience of persons who had been sentenced to life imprisonment, many of whom had their sentence of death commuted in land disputes, I have found many of them completely non-criminal and rather fine men. It is improper to draw any inference from this in an individual case. But land disputes, where large crowds are concerned, certainly appear to me to be of a different kind than individual conflicts of murders.

Because of this, I would myself incline towards clemency. But the major reason for me to do so is the fact that the Head of the State, after careful consideration, has come to that conclusion. I would not like to overrule the President in a matter of this kind.

I am not making any note on the file and I am returning it to you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

2. To B.C. Roy¹

New Delhi
March 18, 1951

My dear Bidhan,

You will remember my writing to you several letters in connection with various charges that had been made against your Government or some officers thereof, in some newspapers and in a book called *Mystery of Birla House*.² In view of

1. JN Collection.

2. Debajyoti Burman, *Mystery of Birla House* (Calcutta, 1950).

these public charges, which had created some sensation at the Congress Session at Nasik and elsewhere, I felt that it would be very desirable for some kind of an enquiry to be instituted by you. Normally, where such charges are made which create a public impression, an enquiry is considered necessary to clear the name of Government or to punish the officer who may have misbehaved. As you know, there is a widespread impression in the public that both the Government of India and some provincial Governments are lacking in their dealings with tax evaders, specially the more highly placed of them. This impression is, I am sure, very largely wrong. But there it is and it has to be met.

In the particular case to which I have referred there were very open accusations supported by some kind of *prima facie* evidence. Our own Finance Ministry was definitely of opinion that something should be done. At that time you sent me a long explanation and further said that the conduct of N.C. Roy,³ an officer concerned in this matter, was being enquired into.

The two matters are, of course, quite separate. I do not know what the result of your enquiry into N.C. Roy's case has been.

Altogether there is a great feeling of disquiet in people's minds about all these incidents. I see that there was a heated debate in your Assembly about it.⁴ In view of this I would suggest to you again to have some kind of a proper enquiry that would allay public suspicions and would redound to the credit of the Government.

I shall be glad to know what was the report of the enquiry in regard to N.C. Roy.

Yours,
Jawahar

3. N.C. Roy, the then Assistant Commissioner of Commercial Taxes, Calcutta, had exposed the concealment of income by a certain cotton mill. He was later implicated in a case of leakage of secret documents and removed from Government service in May 1952.
4. On 15 March 1951, there were stormy scenes in the Bengal Assembly.

3. Part B States¹

So far as Part B States are concerned they should approximate almost entirely as rapidly as possible to Part A States.²

I have sympathy with Part C States also but there are essential difficulties in treating them alike. They have to be treated somewhat differently not because the human beings there are different but the conditions are different.

I have entire sympathy with what Mr Hanumanthaiya said³ but I do not have much sympathy with what Mr Awadesh Pratap Singh had said.⁴ His speech was unfortunate. He made a personal remark against Mr Gopalaswami Ayyangar whose advice I value and who has done extraordinary good work in the Government. He had called all servicemen and ICS officers traitors. It was utterly irresponsible. Mr Awadesh Pratap should know very well the state of affairs in his own State when he was the Chief Minister. It was in his time that the State went to pieces and action had to be taken....⁵

It was patent and obvious that every part of India should be treated equally. Every individual citizen should have the same rights and opportunities, the same measure of freedom and responsibility. Why then is it so that for a temporary period a certain classification has been introduced in the Constitution? It is because of certain historical reasons. For my part I should like to do away with this as early as possible. So far as Part B States are concerned it is the policy of the Government that they should approximate almost entirely to Part A ones. So far as Mysore and Travancore and Cochin are concerned who can call them backward? They are at least as forward as, and in some respects more forward than, Part A States.

1. Reply to debate at AICC meeting, New Delhi, 5 May 1951. From the *National Herald*, 6 May 1951.
2. Part A States consisted of the former provinces, which, in some cases, included parts of the princely States. Part B States comprised those princely States which had grouped themselves into Unions.
3. Hanumanthaiya, a prominent Congressman from Mysore, had moved a resolution which sought to abolish forthwith the distinction between Part A and Part B States. He also objected to the States Ministry being presided over by an ex-Dewan of a State.
4. Awadesh Pratap Singh, Congressman from Vindhya Pradesh and ex-prime minister, Rewa State, bitterly attacked the States Ministry and the "ICS rule" in Vindhya Pradesh. He said this was no better than the previous British regime.
5. Awadesh Pratap Singh interrupting him said: "The State went to pieces not because of me but because of the States Ministry. You may inquire and find out the truth."

Old Indian States differ from one another greatly. In some parts ancient feudalism still exists today. There are all kinds of relics of ancient times to be found there. Some of them are more advanced or backward than others for historical reasons. The general manner of bringing these States together, States jumbled up into unions, created artificiality. You cannot create a living entity out of artificial jumbling of States into unions. Whether in Rajasthan or Vindhya Pradesh or Madhyabharat there were large numbers of States.

In the course of an afternoon drive once I passed through half a dozen States and I had trouble too about the National Flag on my car. Although they had been integrated they were not natural entities.

In some States there was an integrated machinery of administration and they had inherited it. That had advantages as well as disadvantages though the advantages might outweigh the disadvantages. In other States there was no machinery. In a place like Mysore the integrated machinery was there. In certain respects Mysore was more forward than other parts of India. But difficulties arose because of the covenants, etc. With amazing speed Sardar Patel entered into a large number of covenants with the princes. It produced quick and good results, but it had also its disadvantages. We have to pay for it, although it was magnificent work done by Sardar Patel at a time when any other course would have been disastrous.

When we talk of B and C States we talk of something full of dissimilarity. No yardstick applied to all of them is good enough. It is not a question of human beings being good or bad. It is a question of there not being proper administration and various other things. They have all the problems that we have plus many other problems. Any kind of broad generalization of all States is difficult.

As regards Part C States, I do not like this classification. It does not sound nice. But C States are of great variety. Delhi is a C State, but who can say Delhi is not forward? What comes in the way of Delhi is New Delhi, which is a place 80 to 90 per cent governmental and the rest diplomatic. But can anyone treat Delhi on an equal footing with Manipur and Tripura? I like tribal people. In many ways they are more advanced than other people. They have their own type of government which is a good type. They are in a modern sociological sense backward. But I think, they are more forward than we are. They are, however, to be treated differently. Any resolution bracketing all the States is not wise. It does not solve the problem.

This resolution recommends changes in the Constitution. Amendments to the Constitution, of course, can be made. The house has a right to suggest changes in the Constitution. Nevertheless it is a rather ticklish matter if any change in the Constitution is to be dictated by this house. It is for the Working Committee to think on the matter and give its opinion to the Government.

4. To Rajendra Prasad¹

New Delhi
May 17, 1951

My dear Mr President,

Thank you for your letter of the 12th May with which you have sent me a letter and note received from the Socialist Party.² Normally, any individual or group desiring to present a petition to you might be given an opportunity to do so. In the present case, if a few representatives of the Socialist Party desired to meet you and present a petition, possibly there would have been no objection.

It is patent, however, that the idea behind this representation is something in the nature of an agitational challenge. The whole conception of a large procession being taken to Government House indicates that. Presumably these demands are the basis of some kind of election programme of the Socialist Party and this procession is a part of the election campaign. As such, it seems to me proper that the President should keep himself aloof from it.

There is another point to be considered. So far as I know, processions are not allowed in Delhi at present. Certainly they are not allowed in the precincts of Parliament or Government House. It would be improper for us to relax this rule for a particular procession, force especially a procession of the kind envisaged. It is possible that the Socialist Party might think in terms of breaking the order banning processions. In that event it becomes still more undesirable for the President to associate himself in any way with this business.

I am consulting the Home Minister about this matter. He will be able to inform me of what the rules governing processions are and how he intends dealing with this proposed procession. On hearing from him, I shall write to you again.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No 16/2/51-Poll-MHA.
2. Rajendra Prasad wrote that the Socialist Party had written saying that they had decided, along with the Hind Kisan Panchayat and Hind Mazdoor Sabha, to take out a procession on 3 June 1951 and proposed to hand over to the President the *Jana Ghoshana Patra* and desired that the President should address them.

5. To Mangaldas Pakvasa¹

New Delhi
May 18, 1951

My dear Mangaldasji,²

...This applies to the methods for dealing with corruption.³ The present rules are such that it is very difficult to get any evidence. We have referred such matters on several occasions for enquiry. The result has almost always been that there was no solid material to go upon. Sometimes a kind of moral conviction arose and we made the person resign. In a few cases, where there was evidence, we went to the courts.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection. Extracts.
2. He was at this time the Governor of Madhya Pradesh.
3. In his letter of 15 May 1951, Mangaldas Pakvasa had suggested to Nehru that quick action should be taken by the courts against the blackmarketeers, that in the States the Ministers should become intolerant of corruption of the slightest degree and that if charges of corruption were made against Ministers, whether at the Centre or in the States, the matter should be immediately referred to a non-official body for quick investigation and disposal.

6. To C. Rajagopalachari¹

New Delhi
May 28, 1951

My dear Rajaji,

I had a brief talk with the President about the Socialist procession on June 3rd.² I have been thinking about it also.

I suggested to you previously that we should declare a small area round about Parliament House, Government House and the Secretariat as outside the bounds of meetings and processions. The area should not be big. I still hold to this opinion. Presumably this area would be limited by the end of Kingsway near the fountains.

1. File No 16/2/51-Poll-MHA.
2. A People's Charter demanding the abolition of zamindari, redistribution of land, reduction of the price level and work for all was to be presented to President Rajendra Prasad.

This banning of an area is good, so far it goes. Are we to stop the procession as it enters this area, that is when it reaches the end of Kingsway and approaches the fountains? On the whole, I think, we should not do this. It is a huge open space and it will be difficult to control any crowd there. They are bound to trickle through and collect in large numbers behind any police force that you might put there, which will then be between two crowds which might be hostile. That is a bad position for the police. I think therefore that we might not interfere with their march from the fountains up towards Government House. I am specially inclined to think so, as the day is Sunday and our offices will be closed. If the offices had been open, I would probably have come to a different conclusion. Now it seems to me a safer policy to allow them to march, if they want to, right up to the President's main gate, which should be kept closed. There is no possibility of their going in and the other entrances to the President's House should be guarded and if possible, closed.

This will avoid any conflict with the police and any undesirable development. If necessary, later, some persons who play an important part in the procession, might be arrested for breach of an order, because they will have gone to the forbidden territory. That is a matter which might be considered later. I would be inclined not to arrest them, if they are quite peaceful. The distance from the fountain to the President's House is a very small one. The roads are broad and the day will be Sunday. The procession might be led by Jayaprakash, Lohia and other important socialist leaders. To arrest them might be playing into their hands.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

7. To C. Rajagopalachari¹

New Delhi
May 29, 1951

My dear Rajaji,

This evening, after I came back from the Party meeting, I met a deputation from Delhi. I must confess that I have a great deal of sympathy with the Delhi people. I think they have been poorly treated by us during the last three or four years. Vallabhbhai was less than kind or even considerate to them. I

1. File No 28(15)/56-57-PMS.

think they have a case and we have not met it adequately. They have put their case too high and shouted too much. Still they have a case.

I do not think we should do anything to the present Bill.² That would not be feasible and merely have an upsetting effect. I made that clear to the deputation and they appeared to agree to this.

Deshbandhu,³ who was a member of the deputation, then gave me a copy of the letter he had sent to Gopalaswami. I enclose this copy.⁴ I think there is much in this with which we should be prepared to agree.

Great stress was laid on the suggestion that the head of the State should be a senior public man and not an official. In principle, I like the idea, though I cannot think of a suitable person immediately. I have come to think that almost always it is better to have a public man as the head of a State. We can give him the most competent helpers and advisers. It may be, though it does not always follow, that there is more efficiency if the head is a Service man with experience. But even this efficiency does not quite make up for something else that we lose and which perhaps is more valuable. Psychology comes in and should not be ignored.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. Part C States Bill.
3. Deshbandhu Gupta represented Delhi in Parliament in 1951.
4. Not printed.

8. Use of Army to Control Riots¹

...Question: Is there any significance about the Army Special Powers Bill?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Last year, there was a great deal of trouble in Calcutta, Howrah, etc, communal and the rest of it, and all kinds of problems arose about the cooperation of the military with the civil authorities. Of course, it was open to the Government to declare a grave emergency or to declare martial law but we just didn't want to do that. Although in the papers it was announced that martial law had been declared, in fact, it was never declared.

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 11 June 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 51-57, 247-248, 394-397, 433-434, 446, 450-452, 462-463, 470, 487-488, 525-526.

Now the question arose whether we could take the aid of the military without declaring martial law and we have examined recently; there was no clear answer to that. This Bill which is in a consideration stage arose out of that situation so that the military might function when a grave situation arose without martial law. Otherwise, we would be forced, according to the military, to declare martial law and hand it over to them. We do not want to do that.

Q: Will it be under civil or under military authorities?

JN: Under civilian authorities. The top authority would be civilian but the question arose what a military officer can do. Could he have powers such as petty civil officer had? Otherwise the military officer, although he may be a senior officer, cannot function there. He has to drag with him civil officers and the rest. It is more a question of, when the military are required by the civil authorities, fitting into the civil apparatus than anything else.

Q: How is it being done before the general elections?

JN: This matter came up before us in the month of May last year. Then of course some months passed, nothing on it was done by any of the authorities—military, legal—and it took months and months. There was no immediate hurry. Some draft was prepared and circulated to State Governments. It goes on. I do not know if the Bill will come before the general elections or even after.

Q: Was this suggestion originally sponsored by the West Bengal Government?

JN: The question of what was to be done in West Bengal in May last was discussed at that time between the West Bengal Government and us. As Prime Minister, I sent some directives when the situation was bad that the military might be called into Howrah. Even when I sent my directives as Prime Minister, the military said, "How are we to function and under what laws?" I had no answer. What they wanted was a declaration of martial law. This we were not prepared to do. We did not want to go that far. So this question came up.

Q: What particular advantage do you see in this procedure?

JN: I do not know. We must await the procedure. It is the civil authorities who summon the military and it is for the civil authorities to give authority to the military authorities to deal with the situation. How to do this is the question.

Q: Why not hand over to the military?

JN: That means declaration of martial law. That can always be done without any Act of yours.

Q: You said that the military should be enabled to function without dragging with them some 20 or so civilian officers wherever they go. Will not the civilian authorities who are concerned with the day-to-day administration be also able to deal with the situation better than the military authorities?

JN: It will always have the benefit of the civil authorities.

Q: Will the military authorities be subject to disciplinary action as in the case of civil authorities?

JN: I cannot tell you. It depends upon the circumstances. Normally, of course, under the common law, the military or civil authority, they are always subject to the law. If they come under the law, then they are subject to action being taken, unless you pass an act of indemnity....

THE CONGRESS ORGANISATION

1. To J.B. Kripalani¹

New Delhi
2 March, 1951

My dear Jivat,

Thank you for your letter of the 1st March and copy of your letter of the 27th February addressed to Tandon.²

It is difficult for me to advise you in this matter. I am naturally gravely concerned with the existing situation and the general drift. We all agree that much is wrong, though possibly we might not agree about the degree of it. We all agree, I presume, that it is our duty to try to remedy this wrong in so far as one can.

If I could act as an individual, I would very gladly throw up my office as well as my membership of the Congress Working Committee and function in my individual capacity. I would not anyhow leave the Congress. What I would do, I do not quite know and it will depend on many circumstances. But the question does not arise in that form before me because I just cannot function as an individual and I cannot throw up the responsibilities that bear down upon me. So I have to think in that particular context. Whatever evils may have crept into the Congress, I see those evils everywhere else in at least that measure if not more. With the Congress fading away or ceasing to exist, I can only see a large number of mutually warring groups and total instability in the country at a time when stability and some form of joint action was most needed. Therefore, inevitably I seek some way of carrying on with the Congress and trying to improve it. I might fail of course. But I see no other way at present.

It was because of this that I moved the Resolution in the AICC.³ I had no great illusions on the subject and yet I was not without hope that a slight turn might be given to events in the right direction. Having once turned the corner, it was possible for us to proceed in another direction. I find that there is reluctance to turn the corner until the full picture is produced and agreed to. That is rather difficult and hardly possible in the circumstances. I would have liked those initial steps to be taken and then, as a consequence of them, to take other steps. Those initial steps were to lessen somewhat the grave misunderstandings that had arisen among Congressmen and if possible to bring

1. JN Collection.

2. In this letter, Kripalani repeated his earlier plea for an enquiry into the malpractices that had, in his view, characterized the last Congress elections.

3. The Unity Resolution adopted at the AICC meeting at Ahmedabad on 29-30 January 1951 was expected to solve to some extent the serious differences that were developing inside the Congress organisation. See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 15 Part II, pp. 115-116.

some of them more at the centre of things. The next step inevitably would have been for us to tackle some of those very problems that had been raised. But they would be tackled then in a somewhat different way.

In your letter to Tandon, you asked for a large-scale enquiry into Congress elections. Now I can understand an enquiry taking place in regard to a particular matter. But I do not quite understand a vague and roving enquiry which can do no good and is certain to do a lot of harm. The time for an enquiry would be when we take up these matters together and dig out certain obvious cases demanding an enquiry. The question of enquiry should not be tackled with the other question of functioning together. If we once meet together on a common footing, we can deal with this as well as other questions. If we fail then, it is sad and we have to think again.

Regarding the publication of your correspondence with Tandon,⁴ it seems clear to me that this publication cannot help at this stage in bridging the gap that exists. It will in fact rather widen it. Hence I am not keen on this publication so long as I think that an effort should be made to function together. But, of course, if you are anxious to publish these letters, then I am sure no one will come in the way. I suppose Tandon has written to you about the matter.

I am leaving tomorrow for Bombay for a couple of days.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

4. The lengthy correspondence between Tandon and Kripalani began with Kripalani's letter of 10 December 1950 in reply to Tandon's invitation to discuss ways of "solving the problems before" them, and continued till April 1951.

2. To J.B. Kripalani¹

New Delhi
5 March 1951

My dear Jivat,

Thank you for your letter of the 5th March which I received this evening.²

1. JN Collection.

2. Kripalani wrote to Nehru that in view of the prevailing situation in the Congress, it was not possible for him to remain silent and submit to what was happening. He asked Nehru whether he contemplated any other "initial steps" that might give the "slight turn". Tandon, when asked, had had no suggestions to make.

Whether there is a possibility of improvement in the Congress organisation or the Government, will depend on the judgment of each individual. I should imagine that there is always a possibility, even though that possibility may be remote. But apart from this, what one has to find out is a better alternative. A mere negative dislike does not produce results. I have not yet seen any real alternative which might produce adequate results. That does not mean that there can be no alternative. Naturally, in such a difficult and delicate matter, one must know the consequences of one's action and at least see a few steps ahead. The only consequence that I can visualise is the considerable weakening and possibly a break up of the present Congress organisation. I do not at all like the idea of a large number of odd groups pulling in different directions and more or less neutralizing each other. After all we have often to choose between lesser evils. I should like to avoid the evil which appears to lead to no positive results, so far as I can see.

I agree with you that thus far no particular turn has been given to events, which might lead to a movement in the right direction, except one turn, if I may say so. That is a wide expectation in the public mind. There is something in that. We are in fact at present groping for that slight turn. What I suggested to you was that it would be easier to bring about that turn, small or big, from inside rather than from outside. That is that we would like your cooperation from inside to bring about that turn or something that you may consider necessary. If that cooperation did not yield results, one can always think again.

While I would like an enquiry into any important matter which is brought up and which *prima facie* deserves an enquiry, I think that this should be kept apart from the question of giving to the Congress a new turn. There may be a distant connection between the two, but they stand on a separate footing. To make this a condition precedent really takes away from the whole psychological approach to this problem.

I am afraid I can write only for myself and I can hardly speak on behalf of Tandonji. All I can say is that in the discussion in the Working Committee what I have said above seemed to me to represent the general opinion of the Committee.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. Organised Work in the Nation's Service¹

I send my good wishes to the Uttar Pradesh Youth Convention of the Indian Youth Congress, which is going to be held at Allahabad on February 9th. The world today is full of confused action. Nothing is more necessary than clear thinking and balance of mind. Only thus can we meet the difficulties that face us. Enthusiasm is necessary and the will to work. But both of these might be wasted unless there is some clear thought and balance behind them. I trust that the Youth Convention will give a lead for organised work in the nation's service. It is ultimately out of work that clear thought arises.

With all good wishes to the Convention.

1. Message to the Uttar Pradesh Youth Convention of the Indian Youth Congress, 7 March 1951. *Monthly Bulletin of Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee*, MPCC Papers, NMML.

4. To Purushottamdas Tandon¹

New Delhi
March 30, 1951

My dear Purushottamdas,

I am told that you telephoned to me this evening, when I was not available. I was on the point of having my bath. Immediately after the Chinese Ambassador² came and remained here till late at night. I am very anxious to see you and discuss various matters with you. But I just do not know how to find the time tomorrow. I am booked up from early morning till late at night, practically every minute. Day after tomorrow morning I am going to Kashmir for two or three days. On my return I hope to see you.

You have no doubt been following events all over the country. There has been a progressive deterioration in many parts of the country, more especially in the North. In the Punjab political and communal conditions are peculiarly bad. In Pepsu in some ways they are even worse. Rajasthan is no good. In Bihar, apart from other problems, the food problem is assuming alarming proportions.

1. JN Collection.
2. Yuan Chung-hsien.

Apart from this, there is a general deterioration of the Congress position. K.M. Munshi came to me today with some alarm. He has just been to Bombay and he said he was surprised to find the Congress organisation cracking up and all the intelligentsia going against it. Bombay was supposed to be one of our best organised provinces. If this can be said about Bombay, the others are certainly no better.

I had all this in mind when I moved the so-called Unity Resolution at Ahmedabad. Now the position is far worse and indeed is dangerous not only from the Congress point of view, but from the general political and economic point of view. Quite apart from any other action that we may take, it seems to me quite essential that some radical attempt should be made to put the Congress house in order. Only then do we get a basis for effective action. That was my idea at Ahmedabad, but thus far this has not borne fruit. The responsibility is primarily yours, insofar as the Congress is concerned. But I feel a particular responsibility also because I moved the Unity Resolution. Apart from that, of course, we are all responsible and I am greatly distressed at the turn events are taking. Indeed I have been thinking that the situation is serious enough for some persons to be invited from various States for a conference. I do not mean a large conference, but rather a few selected individuals who can confer with us and give us advice. I am afraid the Congress Working Committee, as at present constituted, does not represent many vital elements. Among the persons I would have invited would have been Dr B.C.Roy, B.G. Kher, Pantji and about half a dozen or so others. I feel that we really have to view this problem as objectively and as dispassionately as possible and to forget much that has happened in the near past. Now that the Working Committee is meeting fairly soon, I shall take no step of the kind I have in mind till we have met in Working Committee.³

I feel somewhat reluctant to make any positive suggestion to you. You know that I was rather anxious not to join the Working Committee because I felt the Committee formed was ineffective and not really representative of the people who count in their respective areas. Apart from that, it rather petrified the present position in the Congress and thereby encouraged a measure of disruption. I know that you have corresponded on this subject with some of our old colleagues. That correspondence has not led to any satisfactory result. It is not quite enough to say that the fault lies with the others. We have to bear the consequences anyhow and we cannot afford to see the Congress and the country go to pieces. I am convinced therefore that it is of essential importance to take some radical and rather dramatic step in regard to the Working Committee, which should be followed of course by other steps.

3. The Congress Working Committee met at New Delhi on 7 and 8 April 1951.

In view of the Unity Resolution as well as the deterioration in the country, a reasonable course, so far as the Congress is concerned, is for all of us to resign from the Working Committee and then for you to reconstitute it on a somewhat different basis. This should not be considered as a personal matter, when big issues are at stake. If the whole thing is treated in this way, then the personal equation hardly arises. Even if it arises, it has to be faced.

I find that there is a mounting feeling among our colleagues that this drift must be stopped before it develops into something worse. I am merely hinting at these various matters to you in this letter to enable you to have a glimpse into my mind. I do not wish to develop the argument here.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

5. To Govind Ballabh Pant¹

New Delhi
April 13, 1951

My dear Pantji,²

A few days ago, when the Congress Working Committee was meeting here, Sampurnanand came to see me and we discussed the general situation in the country. Later, both Sampurnanand and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai met me together and we had a long talk. We did not discuss much the so-called "Unity" Resolution of the AICC or even matters pertaining to the Congress organisation as such. We discussed rather the general situation and, more especially, the deteriorating law and order situation in various parts of the country as well as the food situation which, bad in itself, must necessarily add to the difficulties of the law and order situation.

I need not refer here, in this letter, to the various aspects of this general situation which, to say the least of it, is very far from satisfactory and tends to grow worse. The general elections may well lead to disorder on a large scale. Even before these elections, the position may deteriorate in many

1. G.B. Pant Papers, NAI. Similar letters were sent to H.K. Mahtab, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Sampurnanand, B.G. Kher, Morarji Desai, B.C. Roy, A.N. Sinha and Nabakrushna Chaudhuri.

2. He was at this time the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh.

ways. What happens after the elections is another matter for consideration. A very large number of persons will be elected from constituencies which are relatively small in area and where probably narrowly communal and caste considerations may well be dominant. Each caste group would insist on its own candidate. Already there are indications of this. How far the Congress can control this choice of candidates and election, and how far it might itself be influenced by it, it is difficult to say. The position after the elections might well be one which is not pleasant to contemplate. Democracy may well collapse through its own failings and a lack of those qualities which only can make it successful. The quality of our legislatures might be very poor and the narrowest parochial feelings might prevail. Disruptive tendencies, which unfortunately are so evident in India today, would find much greater scope than at present.

The future cannot, therefore, be viewed with any degree of equanimity. I do not think we need be frightened of this future, and in any event, to feel helpless about it is the worst of all preparations for it. I think there is enough strength and vitality in the nation to face this future, provided that that strength and vitality are organised and channelled in the right directions. This is a challenge to us of the severest kind.

I refer to the future. But even the present is disturbing enough, both in itself and as a prelude to that future. The food situation is exceedingly grave in many areas. The spectre of starvation and famine hangs over the land. Even so, there does not seem to be an adequate appreciation of these dangers amongst many of us and we are tied up in our minds and activities with secondary matters. A recent incident throws a lurid light not only on the present but on the future to come. In a district in the UP, only a few days ago, official Panchayat elections took place. Five persons had to be elected and there were two groups—one a Thakur group and the other a non-Thakur group. After a fiercely contested election, the non-Thakur group won and their five members were elected to the Panchayat. The next day, these five members who had been elected were murdered. This may be an extreme and rather unique case. Nevertheless it is very significant both of the law and order position and the way some of our people are reacting to democratic processes.

Sampurnanand, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and I discussed some of these matters and felt that unless we could somehow come to grips with this situation, the drift towards a progressive worsening might well continue. In any event, it is time that we tried to pull ourselves up and tried to come to some decisions as to how we should face this situation. I am not referring merely to the Congress organisation, although what happens to the Congress is necessarily an important part of any approach, but rather to a wider approach. One thing that seems ruled out is to allow matters to go on as they are.

What then are we to do? The All India Congress Committee will be meeting early in May.³ But probably it will be engrossed in problems of elections and the like. In any event, the AICC is too large a body to consider such matters. The Working Committee can certainly give consideration. But I rather doubt that, constituted as it is and with the kind of work it normally does, its consideration will yield any fruitful results.

A proposal was made that as an initial step, a few old colleagues and friends might meet and have informal and full talks about these matters. If there are too many people, then the object is not achieved. Usually when we meet, we get entangled in fruitless discussions and accusations. The only purpose of such a meeting would be to have an earnest and frank talk and to try to suggest some method of dealing with the situation. If our talks yield any results in regard to concrete policies or action, we could then take this up in a larger field.

I like the idea of this frank discussion among old friends who, whatever their present differences, have functioned for many years in the Congress in various capacities and who know each other well. It is a little difficult to make a list of suitable persons to be invited. I do not think the list should exceed twelve or, at the most, fifteen, possibly even fewer. We should not ask people on a provincial basis, that is to have provinces represented or Governments or PCCs. The selection can only be on a personal basis. Four or five persons at present in Delhi might join and seven or eight persons might be invited from outside Delhi. As the invitations are rather on a personal basis, naturally I would tend to invite people with whom I have had close personal contact during these past years and who can talk freely on such occasions. Many persons who might have been invited will have to be left out so as not to add to the number.

I am putting these thoughts before you, as I should like you to be one of the persons so invited to come here to join in these private and informal talks. I do not want to make a fuss about this meeting or to give it any publicity, if I can help it. Perhaps we could meet just before the AICC meeting and the Working Committee. The AICC meets on the 5th, 6th and possibly 7th May. That means that the Working Committee will probably meet on the 3rd and 4th May. I would suggest a meeting of our informal group on the 1st and 2nd May, that is just before the Working Committee meeting.

I hope I have given you some idea about what I have in my mind. I feel, if I may say so, somewhat haunted by the present situation. The burden and responsibility on me, as on you, is great and we have to think outside our

3. The session of the All India Congress Committee was held in New Delhi on 5 and 6 May 1951.

narrow grooves of thought and action and face this situation squarely. It may be inconvenient for you to come to Delhi for a number of days. Nevertheless I think the occasion demands that we should meet and exchange our views in perfect freedom and frankness. History has cast a role upon us and we cannot escape from it.

Will you kindly let me know how you feel about this proposed informal meeting and whether you can attend it on the 1st of May. I do hope that you can come. It would help of course if you gave some previous thought and noted down what you think should be done not only at the meeting itself but in the country.

I would beg of you to keep this matter secret.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

6. To B.G. Kher¹

New Delhi
April 13, 1951

My dear Kher,

I enclose a letter for you. For the present I am sending it to Govind Ballabh Pant,² Bidhan Chandra Roy and Nabakrushna Chaudhuri, Chief Minister of Orissa. I shall add two or three names more from outside, for instance Anugraha Narayan Sinha of Bihar and possibly Katju, Governor of Bengal. I am afraid that South India, Punjab and some other States would not be represented at this gathering. I do not quite know whom to invite.

In Delhi I would probably invite Mahtab, Gulzari Lal Nanda and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. There would of course also be Sampurnanand who made this proposal to me. This is just a preliminary indication to you.

I should particularly like you and Morarji Desai to come for this meeting. I am not writing to Morarji separately and I hope you will share these letters with him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.
2. See the preceding item.

7. To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai¹

New Delhi
April 16, 1951

My dear Rafi,

With reference to my letter of April 13th,² which I sent you, I have also sent it to the following persons:

Dr B.C. Roy, Pantji, B.G. Kher and Morarji Desai, Sampurnanand, Sri Krishna Sinha, Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Nabakrushna Chaudhuri, Dwarka Prasad Misra, Mahtab and Gulzari Lal Nanda.

That makes 12 in all, excluding me. I do not intend sending it to anyone else unless there is some special reason. But I was wondering if it will not be worthwhile to invite Kamaraj Nadar, President of the Tamilnad PCC. What do you think about this?

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. JN Collection.
2. See *ante*, pp. 334–337.

8. The Task before the Congress¹

Congressmen must make their organisation a live one. The Congress must present before the people a real programme of work which would appeal to them.

Much is made of the elections. Elections only give a chance to a party which is victorious to do something constructive. By itself elections mean nothing.

Now in Bihar and Madras near famine conditions are prevailing. If famine were actually to stalk these areas and lakhs of men, women and children were

1. Address to the UPPCC session, Bulandshahr, 29 April 1951. From *The Hindustan Times* and the *National Herald*, 30 April 1951.

to die, of what use would be the talk of elections? I would say to hell with elections, if people perished through lack of food.

Congressmen should bend all their energies to face the challenging food situation boldly and socially.

I appeal to cultivators not to keep their surplus foodgrains with themselves but to give them to the Government to help their brethren in other parts of the country. Surplus areas like Bulandshahr must go all out to help their distressed brethren by intensified procurement.

Elections would pale into nothingness and would be useless if we cannot save people; they must be saved and we will have to face this grave situation with all our strength and will, whatever our politics be.

I am confident that the Congress is bound to win in the coming general elections. I appeal to Congressmen to sink petty differences and maintain the Congress as an essentially dynamic body and a living force by intensified constructive work—creative, planned work—and as representatives of the people's urge.

Who will oppose unity and discipline among Congressmen? The Congress organization was perhaps no more free from faults and shortcomings in the great days of the struggle for freedom—then the faults might have been only a few more or a few less than now. See the fate of democracy in Germany and some other countries after World War. Democracy hangs by a slender thread. When we accept democracy and the rule by majority vote we have to accept the responsibilities which that system entails and if we evade them all power of the vote becomes useless. I myself am a democrat but on occasions the majority vote might be unwise too.

Congressmen should not pass too many resolutions but decide the general policy and then implement it vigorously. Unless the Congress created a life force in its organization, it would be ultimately defeated even after winning the elections.

Congressmen must not lose track of the fundamental problems in the petty details of office work. Only when fundamental problems are tackled would the country be able to stand firmly at this delicate juncture of world history.

The Congress would not be a living, growing organization if it fails to represent the urges and forces of the times. Congressmen must pull themselves out of narrow grooves and not think of the elections alone. I have no doubt that the Congress would win the elections, for I know that the Congress is like a powerful elephant and is bound to sweep the polls. Whatever be its faults, this elephant, though a little lean and aged, is still an elephant.

Congressmen should be conscious of the urgency of the critical world situation and see how far the Congress and Congressmen could represent the life and the life force in the country.

The task of the Congress would not end with victory in elections. They must think in the broader perspective of the general good of the country.

India and its people are being put to a great test. The future will depend on how well they can answer these questions.

In the world, today, the really free nations are a mere handful, say four or five. I would not like to name them, but that is the position. Most of the countries in the world are dominated in some way or other and are called satellites of powerful countries. In the United Nations there are 50 or 60 member States; they have equal rights, yet all of them are not free to do what they like. So India must not lose sight of the fundamentals nor get lost in narrow parochial matters.

Sometimes to get food India had to bear even some unpleasant things from others. So it is more dignified to rely more and more on ourselves. People in distress will not be allowed to die.

9. To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai¹

New Delhi

May 3, 1951

My dear Rafi,

I am just sending you a few lines written late at night.² As you know, I have been greatly distressed in common with you and others at the turn many events have taken. I am quite convinced that it will be a bad day for India if we cannot stop this disruption and rot setting in. We have to act in a big way, each one of us, and not be tied down by prejudices, however justified these might appear to be. We have arrived at a critical stage and what we decide in the course of the next two or three days may mean a great deal for the country. I hope therefore that all of us will decide rightly.

It is impossible in this complicated and rather crooked world to get everything straightened out easily or quickly. One has to take one step at a time. A right step taken leads necessarily to right results. That is my firm opinion. That step must be taken with good heart and with a feeling of confidence and not hesitatingly and with expectation of failure. It should be taken generously and with goodwill. That brings forth goodwill from others.

It rests on you a good deal as to what future developments might be, not only in your individual capacity but as one who can influence others. You can

1. JN Collection.

2. Since the Congress Democratic Front was scheduled to meet on 3 May 1951, Nehru made personal appeals earlier in the day to leaders of the Front like Kidwai not to secede from the Congress and to liquidate the Democratic Front in the larger interests of the country.

affect the fortunes of the country to some extent at this critical stage. I hope therefore that you will act rightly and with faith.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

10. To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai¹

New Delhi
May 6, 1951

My dear Rafi,

The last few days have been full of what the newspapers call "intense political activity."² These days are over, not as I would have wished them. However, it is not much good thinking about what has happened. For the present, inevitably, there is some kind of relaxation after the tension of this week.

You complained to me, in a brief note this morning, that I did not have enough faith in you, or at any rate, that is what you must have meant. I wrote in reply that you were mistaken. But the question arises how much faith you have in me or in my judgment. Perhaps not much. But, in any event, that faith cannot be wholly lacking. I cannot claim, and have not claimed, that anyone, however close he might be to me, should stand by me or agree with me under any circumstances. But I do claim that I have a right to be consulted. Unfortunately this does not often take place. You consult frequently enough many of your other colleagues and are no doubt influenced by what they say. It is quite possible that I might have gathered some experience in a fairly lengthy career and that this might be useful.

I hope that neither you nor your colleagues will take any precipitate action. Frankly, I am much more interested in you than in your colleagues. Whether I judge the matter from the personal point of view or, what is more important, the impersonal and the objective, I am deeply interested in what you do or what you do not do. Hence my request to you not to indulge in any hasty action and to discuss matters with me in the course of the next two or three days.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. JN Collection.

2. On 4 May, Nehru and A.K. Azad persuaded the leaders of the Democratic Front to accept their advice of unconditional dissolution. Though the Front dissolved itself, it was decided by the leaders to meet again a few weeks later to review the situation.

11. Lifting of Controls¹

The question of control and decontrol is very vital for it has far-reaching effects.² It affects materially the cost of living in the country, which, in turn, has a bearing on numerous problems, including those of higher wages. It is, therefore, not proper to consider the question of controls divorced from the general economic policy. Certain actions which in their limited spheres seem good and harmless have very disastrous repercussions on other domains of life. Our economic policy should be directed to check anti-social trends.

My Government had done many things in the past for which it had to repent. Decontrol of cloth in 1948 is one of such actions. This action led to acute scarcity of cloth in various parts of the country while a few people made colossal profits and in some cases even income-tax was not paid on those enormous amounts. It was a strange situation that three months earlier we were told that there was a glut in the cloth market. When we decontrolled, within three months cloth famine was reported. I do not want to apportion blame for that ugly state of affairs, but I must say that we must not repeat such mistakes which might shake the very foundations of our economic policy. My Government's policy is to check any rise in prices as well as the spiral of inflation. If once the equilibrium is disturbed, the results will be far-reaching and disastrous. I do not want that control should remain for ever. But I must say that because of some minor complaints, which are quite justified, we must not take any step which might lead to greater hardships and for which we might have to repent in future. Barring two or three countries, controls are in force in the whole of the world and trade unions have supported the policy of controls vigorously for they know that labour will inevitably suffer if controls are removed. It is strange that a great hue and cry is raised on account of shortage of sugar. People ought to put up with these trifling inconveniences.

On matters like controls, which touch almost every walk of the nation's life, it is not proper to give any directive to the Government merely by considering the problem in isolation. This question must be viewed against the background of the integrated economic problems. It will be better, if the AICC reserves its opinion till the Planning Commission, which is dealing with every question in the requisite integrated background, has finalized its report.

Repeated discussion of the problem of decontrol makes it difficult for the Government to stick to any firm policy. As a result of this, only anti-social elements are benefited.

1. Speech at the AICC session, 6 May 1951. From the *National Herald*, 7 May 1951.

2. A resolution had been moved urging the Government to decontrol sugar and cloth.

12. To Purushottamdas Tandon¹

New Delhi
May 14, 1951

My dear Purushottamdas,

You drew attention this morning to an item of news to the effect that some MPs had held a meeting. I do not know much about this meeting. Indeed, all I knew is contained in the newspapers.² But previously about half a dozen of them had come to me and expressed their distress at the present situation in the country, and more especially in the Congress. None of these persons was connected with the Democratic Front or any other group. They were just earnest young Congressmen. I had a talk with them and pointed out that so far as I was concerned, I had tried to prevent any kind of a split in the Congress. I thought that things were going in the right direction when the Democratic Front was dissolved, but later, to my surprise, other developments took place, which undoubtedly had made matters much worse.

I told them also that I did not at all feel at home in the kind of politics that was developing in India. I referred to this kind as "backstair parlour" politics. Important issues are not discussed in the Congress itself or in the AICC, but are considered by odd individuals or small groups privately. This seemed to me a wrong approach which might progressively vitiate our politics. It seemed to me astonishing that a number of prominent members of the Congress should think of leaving the Congress without putting their case, whatever it was, before the AICC. That, apart from the full session of the Congress itself, was a proper forum for the consideration of major problems which arise. To decide them by private interviews or even correspondence was not the right way and was unfair to the public.

Some of these young men came to me this morning after I left you and said that they wanted to requisition a meeting of the AICC to consider some of the important issues that had arisen. I said that they were at perfect freedom to requisition a meeting, although it was rather odd to do so soon after an AICC meeting. But, in any event, a meeting of the AICC was likely to be held within two months or so to consider the election manifesto and other important matters.³ A requisitioned meeting has to be held within two months.

1. JN Collection.

2. *The Statesman* reported on 14 May 1951 that "Seventy five MPs belonging to the Congress Parliamentary Party" met in New Delhi on 13 May and "appealed to the Congress President, Mr Tandon, Acharya Kripalani, leader of the recently dissolved Congress Front, and other leaders to strengthen Mr Nehru in his efforts to maintain unity in the Congress ranks."

3. The AICC met at Bangalore from 13 to 15 July 1951 to adopt the election manifesto.

In effect, therefore, it would make little difference, except one that public attention would be directed to certain issues and problems which were agitating the country. This consideration by the public would certainly be a good thing and would tend to bring out into the open these questions which were being discussed in private parlours and, in a distorted way, in the Press.⁴

I am writing to you to inform you of these conversations that I have had. I do not know when you will get this letter. Unfortunately you have gone almost out of reach for sometime just when it was perhaps more necessary than ever that you should be approachable.

Apart from this, I am greatly troubled about recent happenings and developments. I am not concerned about individuals and whether they remain in the Congress or leave it, although this does make a difference. What I am concerned with is the progressive confusion in the public mind and the spirit of disintegration that is about. Whatever the rights and wrongs may be, there can be little doubt that this is going to do harm to the Congress and the national cause and this at a time which is critical from every point of view. I find it difficult to function adequately in such an atmosphere. I do not fit in.

I wanted to talk to you about all this and perhaps I shall do so on your return. Meanwhile I am sending you this letter to give you some idea of the troubled state of my mind.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

4. Kripalani and Kidwai had declined to become members of the Election Committee. It was presumed that two other ministers, A.P. Jain and Mahavir Tyagi, who were close associates of Kidwai, would also resign.

13. To Chaman Lal¹

New Delhi
May 17, 1951

My dear Chaman Lal,

Your letter of May 16th.² I am afraid I can send you no helpful answer. Everybody seems to function independently, at any rate so far as I am

1. JN Collection.

2. Chaman Lal wrote that he had discussions with Azad and Kidwai and, according to Kidwai, acceptable decisions were difficult to be obtained from the AICC, which was a "packed" body, whereas a special session of the Congress dominated by Nehru would be different. Therefore Chaman Lal favoured a special session of the AICC.

concerned. I do not propose to take any step such as calling a special session of the Congress or even calling the AICC. It is open to others to do so. I have been embarrassed sufficiently by my doing something which was not agreed to by others.

What I shall do personally is another matter and I shall give thought to it after I see what the developments have been. I am afraid I am not very competent at the game of parlour politics where decisions are made by individuals and small groups independently of each other. I feel a little tired of all this business.

If you come to Delhi, you can certainly come to see me. But there is no particular point in coming for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To J.B. Kripalani¹

New Delhi
May 28, 1951

My dear Jivat,

You have been wandering in distant parts of India and been rather out of reach.² Now that you have returned to Delhi, I am writing to you this letter. There is nothing very new that I am going to write about. But you know my mind, I hope, well enough.

I have been greatly distressed at recent happenings and the widening gap that is separating old friends and colleagues. Normally speaking, and if it was a question of principle, I think there is much to be said even for a break and the formation of separate groups or parties. But, in existing circumstances, I feel convinced that we shall not be able to serve the country or the cause we have at heart in this way. I have given the most earnest and continuous thought to this matter, and I have weighed all that you have said. Even accepting the truth of much that you have said, still I come to the same conclusion.

1. JN Collection.

2. In Madras on 17 May 1951, Kripalani announced his resignation from the Congress. At a public meeting in Nagpur the next day, he explained that the purpose of his leaving the Congress was "to gather all the forces that were opposed to the Government into one fold." He returned to Delhi on 24 May.

We live in strange and dangerous times, both from the point of view of the world and of India. We dare not take grave risks. All of us, whoever we might be, have naturally to think of the bigger issues. You have no doubt given thought to them. I feel therefore that it would be unfortunate in the extreme for this break to continue and to widen. Inevitably, as high principles are not involved, the break must be largely on personal grounds, and that is bad and can only lead to a continuation of personal controversy which does not help even in public education.

I see in this evening's paper that you are convening a meeting of some of your colleagues at Patna on June 16th and that you intend forming a separate party then.³ I would beg of you not to hurry and not to take a step which it is difficult to reverse. All of us should be wise enough to find some way out.

These last days of Parliament are imposing a terrific strain. Today we sat almost continuously, with a break for lunch, from 8 in the morning till 9.30 at night. Tomorrow the Constitution Amendment Bill is coming up first thing in the morning and I shall be in charge of it. I do not know how long it will last.

But anyhow I hope that we shall meet sometime or other to have another talk. Whatever the result, it is good to talk with old friends and colleagues.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. Kripalani launched the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party at Patna on 16 June 1951.

15. To C. Rajagopalachari¹

New Delhi
June 9, 1951

My dear Rajaji,

I have been so terribly busy for some weeks now, that I have had no chance of a talk with you, although my mind has been greatly troubled. I hope that I shall have that chance before you go to Madras from Delhi. Meanwhile it is perhaps worthwhile for me to give you some indication of the working of my mind.

I have been feeling exceedingly exhausted, both physically and mentally. I do not remember ever having felt like this before. As a result of this my

1. JN Collection.

nerves have been on edge. I suppose I shall recover soon from it, now that the daily strain is a little less.

But it is not because of any momentary exhaustion that I have gradually come to certain conclusions. These have been working in my mind for some time past. You will remember that about two weeks ago or so I wrote to Tandon and sent him my resignation from the Parliamentary Board. That was not a sudden thought but the result of several days of thinking. It is true that the immediate cause for it was the situation in the Punjab and the way the Parliamentary Board was treated by the Punjab people and notably by Dr Gopichand.² The Parliamentary Board was made to appear quite helpless and ridiculous. I did not relish this at all and saw no reason for continuing in a Board which was becoming increasingly powerless to do anything. But, as I have said above, this was the final blow. There were many other causes which led me to my conclusion. I have written to Tandon again that I stand firmly by my decision and that this might be communicated to the Congress Working Committee at its next meeting on the 12th June. In coming to this conclusion, I have weighed all the consequences.

I have an increasing feeling that such utility as I have had is lessening and I work more as an automaton in a routine way rather than as an active and living person. Throughout my public life, I have drawn my strength chiefly from my contacts with the people. Those contacts grow less and less and I find no recompense for them in my new environment. So I grow rootless and feel unhappy. The trend of events and what we ourselves do seems to take me away more and more from many things that I have valued in life and from such ideals as I have nourished. Functioning in such a way ceases to have much meaning.

Many of our policies, economic and other, leave a sense of grave uneasiness in me. I do not interfere partly because I am not wholly seized with the subject and partly because of myself being entangled in a web out of which it is difficult to emerge. We function more and more as the old British Government did, only with less efficiency. The only justification for less efficiency is a popular drive with popular enthusiasm. We have neither that enthusiasm of the people nor the efficiency. We rely more and more on official agencies which are generally fairly good, but which are completely different in outlook and execution from anything that draws popular enthusiasm to it. Complaints grow all round us and we shift about in our policies frequently. In trying to put an end to one difficulty we produce several others. Our economic approach is both conservative and unstable.

I feel that if I have to be of any real use in the future, I must find my roots again. I do not think I can do so by continuing for much longer in my

2. See *ante*, pp. 301-304.

present routine of life. I am prepared to continue for a while, but not too long. I do not think that my days of useful work have ended, but I feel sure that my utility will grow less and less in existing circumstances.

I hope that during the next month I shall have some leisure to think out some of the problems that confront us. I propose to remain in Delhi most of this time.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

16. To Purushottamdas Tandon¹

New Delhi
June 12, 1951

My dear Purushottamdas,

You mentioned, in the course of the Working Committee meeting today, that a number of resignations had been received by you. I believe the figure mentioned by you was 101. You did not mention any names. But of course some names have appeared in the public Press. I do not quite know what you intend doing about these resignations. I think it will be advisable to do nothing at all about them for the present. I mean that no formal acceptance need be made. Of course if a person wants to resign, he is perfectly free to do so and we cannot and should not stop him or her. But I think it would be advisable for us not to take any step on our part at the present stage.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. JN Collection.

17. To A. K. Azad¹

New Delhi
June 13, 1951

My dear Maulana,

The Working Committee, which met yesterday, has decided to convene the AICC meeting on the 13th of July at Bangalore. The Working Committee

1. JN Collection.

meets on the 10th of July at Bangalore. These meetings are not normal but specially meant to consider the entire situation in the country and in the Congress, and to lay down our objectives and our views in regard to the principal problems of today. Incidentally, they will also consider the internal situation in the Congress. They may also draft the election manifesto or, at any rate, give directions for it.

There is an idea also, suggested by me, that a full session of the Congress should be held two months later, say sometime in September, to consider these matters and confirm or vary the decisions of the AICC.

Kripalani has gone very far indeed away from the Congress and has been making daily very bad and offensive speeches. He calls upon the Government to resign, condemns all efforts at unity and generally uses strong language for everything. He has gone so far as to disturb many of his own colleagues.

There is going to be a convention at Patna on the 16th of the Kripalani group and others invited. Kripalani wants to start a formal party then. Rafi Ahmed is not quite of the same opinion and wants to wait till the AICC is over. In any event, he will not commit himself at Patna.

Apart from the Working Committee meeting, I have had long and frank talks with a group of persons, including Dr B.C. Roy, Morarji Desai, Govind Ballabh Pant, Sampurnanand, Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Sri Prakasa and Gulzari Lal Nanda. The decision to hold an AICC meeting has been generally welcomed. This meeting is looked upon as rather a critical one from the point of view of the future of the Congress. I am supposed to draft resolutions or a statement for it. I hope you will be back here by then.

As regards the Punjab Ministry affair, as I wrote to you, I resigned from the Parliamentary Board. I expressed myself rather strongly about the various steps taken by Dr Gopichand. The Parliamentary Board came to the decision (I was absent then) that Dr Gopichand should be called upon to resign and that there should be no Congress Ministry till the elections. The Congress President conveyed this to Dr Gopichand who was in Simla then. Gopichand, as usual, is wavering and had not made up his mind yet. He is playing for time and will probably get his party to ask for a reconsideration of this resolution by the Parliamentary Board. There is no chance of that.

I am going to Nepal on the 16th for three days and then for two days to Bihar in the scarcity areas. I shall be back here on the 20th evening.

The situation in regard to Kashmir vis-a-vis Pakistan is deteriorating rapidly, and Zafrullah Khan has just issued a serious threat.²

I hope you are getting well.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. See *post*, pp. 361-362.

18. To S. Radhakrishnan¹

New Delhi
June 13, 1951

My dear Radhakrishnan,

Thank you for your letter of the 1st June.² I have read with particular interest your reply to the American critic.³ I think this is a fine document.

It is true that we are having a great deal of trouble in India and all kinds of disruptive tendencies are at work. What disturbs one specially is the purely negative and destructive attitude adopted by most people. That is so easy and yet it leads to nothing. However, I do not despair and I feel that there are vital elements in India which can pull through. There is a great deal of heart-searching going on at present amongst all of us. Next month we are meeting in Bangalore in Working Committee and All India Congress Committee for prolonged sessions to discuss these special matters regarding our basic policies. It is possible that we might have a special session of the Congress later in the year.

All this will not lead to any magical change in a difficult situation, but I think it will probably lead to clearer thinking and greater cohesion. It will naturally affect Government's policies and activities.

You will appreciate the many difficulties that we have to contend against. It is so easy to answer any question in vacuum, but when considered in relation to a hundred other questions, the answer is not so easy. But I entirely agree with you that our pace has been very slow and we have to quicken the historic process.⁴...

You refer to the association of Cabinet Ministers with the Cultural Congress of Bombay and the Somnath temple inauguration.⁵ I quite agree with you. As a matter of fact I tried to prevent this to the best of my ability, but long ago certain commitments were made by them and it was a little difficult to get out of them. I was particularly unhappy about the fuss about the Somnath temple. Insofar as I could, I tried to make it clear that this had nothing to do

1. JN Collection. Extracts.

2. Radhakrishnan wrote that Nehru's fortnightly letters sounded "depressing" and he (Nehru) seemed to be "greatly perturbed that the dissensions in the country" were "on the increase" and there was "no unity of purpose in the Cabinet."

3. F.S.C. Northrop.

4. Radhakrishnan had written: "I admit that we are moving in the right direction, but the pace is dangerously slow. When great issues are at stake we cannot be content with small things done in small ways. We have to quicken the historic process."

5. Radhakrishnan had said that the association of Cabinet Members with the Cultural Congress at Bombay and the Somnath temple was "liable to misunderstanding".

with our Government. But previously Sardar Patel had gone some distance in committing the Government.

You refer to foreign visitors not being allowed to come to one Congress.⁶ This is not wholly correct. We tried to treat both these Congresses on exactly the same level. We did not ban either, but we said that Delhi was not a suitable venue for either of them. As for foreign visitors, our general rule was not to encourage them for a particular purpose, though we said that we welcomed eminent foreign visitors, including those from Russia and China, separately. Four or five Americans and others managed to come independently and attended the Bombay Cultural Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Radhakrishnan wrote that people noticed that "we disallow foreign visitors to one Congress and allow them to the other."

19. To Asaf Ali¹

New Delhi
June 25, 1951

My dear Asaf,²

I owe you many apologies for not answering your letters. I have read them with great interest and I am particularly happy to know that you have come out of hospital fit and strong and are generally full of kick. That is as it should be.

So far as we are concerned here, we go from one difficulty to another and crisis succeeds crisis. I am thoroughly exhausted by all this business and yet there is no escape for me. I have, however, finally decided to run away for a week to a remote place in Kashmir, on the way to Amarnath. I am leaving early tomorrow morning. Immediately on my return, I have to deal with Graham, the UN man on Kashmir and that is a ticklish business. Then I go to Bangalore for the meetings of the Working Committee and the AICC. These meetings are rather significant and out of the ordinary. We are supposed to take a stocktaking of the past and to decide about the future. The burden of

1. JN Collection.

2. He was at this time the Governor of Orissa.

this too largely falls on me. Meanwhile, Kripalani has sailed away from the Congress and is busy forming his party.

I sometimes think why human beings should be so utterly foolish as to waste their time and energy as I do, without apparent result or profit to anybody, least of all to myself, and yet one cannot run away.

Your province, Orissa, has suddenly appeared on the scene and there is talk of an overdraft in the Reserve Bank for several crores.³ The Chief Minister and others are coming here to discuss this matter.

I have been forwarding your messages to Aruna.

Have a good time while you can.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. *The Statesman* reported on 23 June 1951 that as a result of the deficit budget of the State during the last three years, the Government of Orissa had to overdraw to the extent of about Rs 250 lakhs from the Reserve Bank of India.

THE FIRST GENERAL ELECTIONS

1. Elections and the Political Parties¹

... Question: You ordered elections in Bengal but they were not held.

Jawaharlal Nehru: In Bengal other things happened. We are having enormous difficulties in regard to the preparation of electoral rolls, constituencies, etc, but we are determined to have the elections. Then, if by any chance, in a small part of India we cannot hold it, the rest of it will hold it. We can't hold up because some little corner was not quite ready; we shall deal with it later.

Q: Perhaps you know that some parties have threatened to start a no-tax campaign if elections are not held.

JN: It does not seem to be very becoming for such threats to be made in a matter like this without the slightest justification.

Q: Will you give equal opportunities to all political parties for preparation for and participation in the elections? Will you consider the point that some of the parties are banned locally or virtually so?

JN: The only party that is banned in some provinces is the Communist Party.

Q: I think they have the right to participate in the elections.

JN: As individuals, yes. Parties do not participate in elections. Constitutionally, individuals stand for election; the party supports them no doubt. We have not that kind of block list of parties here. Now take the Congress. It is the individual that has the backing of the Congress, but the Congress Party candidate does not appear in the elections with his card as Congress Party candidate; he stands as an individual with the backing of the Party. An individual can stand for elections. If anybody, let us say, declares war against the Government of India or against the people of India, well certain action is taken against that group. It has nothing to do with elections and nobody can come and tell us: we are going to carry on the war, but under your Constitution you should give us every kind of help; you must not carry on war against us; you must not try to stop our war but must allow us to function normally as a group or a party. That is not my conception of civil liberty.

Q: Have you noticed the discrepancy in your policy about communism at home and in international affairs? Is it that you recognise communism only when it comes to power?

JN: My policy is not governed by this continuous talk of communism at all either in India or outside. Nothing is more confusing than the use of the words

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 13 March 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 67-69, 103, 153, 295, 361-366, 443-445, 482-484, 502-505.

“Communist” and “communism” which has almost become a King Charles’ head or a bogey. It confuses thinking. In fact, the amount of paucity of thought today in the world is amazing whether on the side of Communists who have their slogans or on the side of anti-Communists who have got other slogans against communism. There is no intelligence left in this talk; very little of it, just slogans hurled against each other. Now we are dealing in India, when we talk about communism, not with communism but with terrorist conspiracies against the people and the State. We do not deal with communism. If we wanted to deal against communism, why should we permit the Communist Party to function in large parts of India? But where it is functioning in a terrorist way—certain groups, we ban them. So far as the rest of the world is concerned we are not either strong enough or desirous of taking charge of the whole world. Our own problems are difficult enough. Where other world problems impinge on our problems or we think we can serve the cause of peace we put forward our proposals in regard to them. We are not crusaders of any gospel in the world this way or that way.

Q: Do the Communists as soon as they cross over the Indian border change their character or tactics?

JN: I am not aware of any crossing over of the Indian border.

Q: You must have noticed that the policy of the Communist Party has undergone changes. Every political party has sometimes taken some decision or other. Now that the Communists have changed their policy, will you consider allowing them opportunities to function normally?

JN: The best way to change one’s policy is to change it in practice, not by saying something. As a matter of fact what has been said itself is not adequate change; that is from the point of view of violent and terrorist activities....

2. To B.C. Roy¹

New Delhi
May 13, 1951

My dear Bidhan,

Your letter of the 11th May about the vacancies in the Assembly.² I am afraid I can give you little advice in the matter. I appreciate your arguments. I suppose some other arguments could be advanced the other way.

1. Saroj Chakrabarty, *With Dr. B.C. Roy and Other Chief Ministers* (Calcutta, 1974), p. 184.
2. Roy asked Nehru’s advice regarding the filling of two vacancies in the Assembly.

I think the best thing would be for the matter to be referred to the Parliamentary Board. If you agree, I shall do so or you can do it yourself directly.

I am not at all happy at the developments that are taking place. I am by nature not constituted so as to function in any narrow party groove; nor have I the makings of a dictator. I feel rather fed up with the low standards, intellectual and moral, that I see around me. I do not know what I shall ultimately do.

I suggest that you should write officially to the Parliamentary Board about the vacancies.

Yours,
Jawahar

3. To R.R. Diwakar¹

New Delhi
June 14, 1951

My dear Diwakar,

... I think it will be right for us to allow the use of AIR to recognised parties during the elections. You might find out what the procedure is in England. It might be difficult to say which is a recognised party and which is not, as there are so many groups. Probably the best course would be to allow each recognised party to broadcast a little before the elections. There is plenty of time yet to consider this matter....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No 16(55)/51-PMS. Extracts.

4. To Lord Mountbatten¹

New Delhi
June 24, 1951

My dear Dickie,

Thank you for your letter of the 12th June.² You have given me good advice from the point of view of elections. I wish that was my only trouble. Somehow

1. JN Collection.
2. Mountbatten advised Nehru not to carry on the Government right upto the period of the elections but to let the Ministers work hard among the people to ensure that the Congress Party returned to power. It would be a tragedy "if for the sake of high efficiency in the Government for the next four or five months", Nehru was returned with "an insufficient working majority."

we are surrounded on all sides with a host of maladies and, for the moment, I feel far from fit or, to be more correct, I am fit enough but only just tired and exhausted. I have therefore decided to take a few days off completely. Day after tomorrow morning I am going to Kashmir and I shall proceed straight to the higher mountains and almost to the snowline. I want to be away from human beings and officers and crowds and letters and newspapers. I cannot of course get away from my mind which accompanies me with all its restlessness, troubles and doubts.

So, even when I am near a glacier, my mind will be mostly elsewhere. The chief reason for this is that soon after, in the second week of July, we are meeting in Bangalore for some vital decisions about our future policy. More and more, the burden of decision is cast upon me.

I do not mind very much the split in the Congress Party, though I regret it. My regret is not because it is a split but because some good people have gone away or want to go away. What I am worried much more about is the continuance of the Hindu Mahasabha and like types of communalism. However, do not imagine that I feel down and out. I do not. I am a good fighter, provided I have something worthwhile to fight for. It is only when there is doubt about the immediate objective that one's capacity to function effectively becomes a little less. Crowds gather round me still in vast numbers. The other day³ in Patna I addressed an audience variously estimated at 200,000 to 300,000. At the same time criticism of me and our Government grows. That is natural and I really do not mind it. What I do mind is a general lowering of standards. Some of our periodicals shriek most of the time in most unseemly language.

The elections are still about five months off and much may happen before that time. Nevertheless their long shadow has already appeared on the scene and most groups and even individuals function with elections in their mind. Unfortunately I do not get excited in that way, though I have functioned effectively enough at the time of elections in the past. My idea of an election campaign is to create a strong atmosphere in the country in favour of certain objectives that the Party stands for. It is these objectives and policies that we are going to consider next month in Bangalore.

I hope you are keeping well. From Edwina's letters I find that she continues her rush tours and intensive work. I suppose it is in the blood and cannot be helped or controlled.

Yours
Jawaharlal

3. On 19 June 1951.

6

KASHMIR

1. Kashmir—the Basic Facts¹

... Jawaharlal Nehru: I have got a brief statement which I will read out to be a little more precise. Then you can ask me any questions if you like.

I have avoided, as far as possible, a discussion of the Kashmir issue while the Security Council is considering this matter.² I have also tried not to say anything which might make it more difficult for India and Pakistan to come to an agreement on this or on other issues, because it has been my firm conviction that it is for the good of both countries to come to an understanding and to cooperate together in many common tasks.

Even now, I would have refrained from saying anything as the Security Council is actually considering this matter. But I cannot remain silent when Sir Zafrullah Khan has, on behalf of Pakistan, made charges and insinuations which are wholly false and baseless.³ His previous attempts at justifying Pakistan's case in Kashmir had little to do with the truth. But now he has gone further in this direction and drawn something from his fertile imagination which is outstanding. I shall not refer at present to all the untruths and false arguments that had been raised, but to one thing I must refer, because it is a new approach. He has charged India with a deep conspiracy and with long preparation for sending troops to Kashmir. This is cent per cent false. No member of the Indian Cabinet or of our General Staff had ever thought of this as a remotest possibility till after the invasion of Kashmir from Pakistan, that is during the last week of October 1947. There was a British Commander-in-Chief then and a British Chief of General Staff. It is easy to find out what the facts were and how this question first arose before us after the invasion started.

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 13 March 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 67–69, 103, 153, 295, 355–356, 443–445, 482–484, 502–505.
2. When the Security Council resumed consideration of the Kashmir dispute on 21 February 1951, a letter of 14 December 1950 from Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, protesting against the Kashmir Government's proposal to convene a Constituent Assembly and calling the Security Council's attention to a resolution adopted by the General Council of the Kashmir National Conference on 27 October 1950, which proposed that a Constituent Assembly should be convened, was taken up.
3. On 6 March 1951, Zafrullah Khan said that his task was to indicate where previous efforts had "got stuck", and what was needed to bring the matter towards a speedy, peaceful settlement. The whole argument of the Indian delegate rested on the "absolutely untenable assumption" that India was in lawful occupation of Kashmir. "The stark fact is India's occupation of Kashmir was brought about as the result of a conspiracy between the Hindu ruler of Kashmir and the Hindu leaders of India the victims of that conspiracy being the people of Kashmir." This conspiracy had been hatched, according to him, during the spring and summer of 1947.

The fact of the close connection between the Indian national movement and the national movement in Kashmir led by Shaikh Abdullah is also brought out as evidence of conspiracy. This particular conspiracy in favour of freedom started twenty years ago when Sir Zafrullah Khan and many of his colleagues in Pakistan were directly or indirectly helping in the suppression of freedom movements. In regard to the Indian States, the Muslim League was against any attempt at reform.

It will be remembered that for six months after the invasion of Kashmir, Pakistan continued to deny the presence of Pakistan troops there. This was proved to be false. I am sorry to use strong language, but I can only describe the policy adopted by Pakistan in regard to Kashmir throughout as a perversion of facts and an attempt to cover this up by appeals to communal passion and religious bigotry. We happen to be opposed to all this and the progressive forces of Kashmir who have fought for Kashmir's liberation for the last twenty years have all been opposed to this. It was for this reason that the Muslim League, with its communal policy and two-nation theory, never found any roots in Kashmir.

If the basic facts are in dispute, then the premises must necessarily differ. From differing premises entirely different conclusions must follow. Unwary people accepting certain premises may well come to wrong conclusions without clearing up the basic facts. It is a little absurd to try to answer a question without framing it precisely.

Where charges, such as Sir Zafrullah Khan has put forward, are made against us, how can there be any ground for any discussions and much less for any settlement, until the basic facts are clarified. We are not prepared to be insulted in this way or to be bullied by a repetition of threats and falsehood.

During the last few months there has been constant and continuous talk in Pakistan of *jehad* or holy war against India. It is for the Security Council to consider how far this is in conformity with its previous resolutions and recommendations. This is a matter of serious importance to us and we cannot conceive of any successful talks against this background of menaces and threats. Whether India is weak or strong is of small consequence, when India's honour and bonafides are questioned. We are not prepared to deal with anyone on that basis.

We have repeatedly declared that the people of Kashmir must decide their fate and we adhere to that declaration and will give effect to it to the best of our ability. We have come to certain agreements with the UN Commission on Kashmir and we stand by every single word that we have said.

But we cannot break our pledges or betray the confidence reposed in us by refusing to provide the minimum security necessary for Kashmir so long as there is always danger of a barbarous invasion. We cannot permit foreign troops of any kind to enter Kashmir. We cannot set aside the lawfully established

Government of popular elements which at present controls the greater part of Kashmir. But we are prepared now as ever to give every opportunity for a free determination by the people of Kashmir of their future.

Q: What is the status of the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir?

JN: I don't exactly know what you mean by status. You know that during the last, well, three years or so, we have tried to give some kind of organised—we thought in terms of giving naturally some kind of organised—expression to the Government there; I mean to say some popular legislature. But because of the troubles in Kashmir that could not be done. Ultimately the Government decided, quite rightly, that they should have elected representatives out of whom their Cabinet may be chosen and which can decide also many other questions. If your question is whether this comes in the way of the Security Council coming to any decision then it does not come in the way. We have stated that quite clearly.

Q: Have you any comments to offer on the United States Assistant Secretary Mr McGhee's remarks that the US Government do not consider Pakistan action in Kashmir as aggression?

JN: I had not seen that before. I do not know where he has said it, how and in what terms or context.

Press representatives: He did not say that. What he said was that India should not press for any action against Pakistan on that basis.

JN: That is perfectly true. We have deliberately not asked that Pakistan should be declared an aggressor or sanctions should be imposed and all that, because that is not in our opinion the way to seek a settlement. What we have pointed out was that the fact of Pakistan's aggression should be remembered, should be kept in mind, in considering this question, which is a different thing.

Q: Have you had a report from the Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan about the military coup vis-a-vis Kashmir—that part of the military coup was to take Kashmir. In fact this morning a despatch from a foreign correspondent mentions emperorship to Liaquat Ali Khan or a bullet in his head.⁴ Kashmir is involved in this.

JN: Of course, we have heard from our High Commissioner in Pakistan as we normally hear. But you will remember, I think it was the Defence Secretary of

4. The President of the Punjab Muslim League was reported to have said that if Liaquat Ali gained Kashmir, the people would make him emperor of Pakistan, but if he betrayed Kashmir to "the Hindus", the speaker would be the first to put a bullet into Liaquat Ali.

Pakistan,⁵ who stated that India had nothing to do with this matter. Of course India had nothing to do with it; Kashmir had nothing to do with this matter either. But I cannot discuss with you the background of events in Pakistan—why this took place or why something did not take place. Any such information as we may have is merely conjecture.

Q: The *Manchester Guardian* alleges an inconsistency in the attitude of the Government of India with regard to Kashmir, as on one side India says that Kashmir has acceded to India and on the other side India argues that Kashmir is autonomous and so India cannot interfere.

JN: The answer is the *Manchester Guardian's* ignorance both of facts and of theory. They simply have to read some papers without drawing upon their own imagination when they write about such things. It is perfectly clear that the accession is in regard to certain subjects—defence, foreign affairs and communications. India can, under the terms of accession, have its way in regard to these matters. Constitutionally speaking, in regard to other matters it cannot, except by advice of course.

Q: India has said at the Security Council that the best way of seeking a solution of the Kashmir problem was through direct negotiations. Do you think that is possible?

JN: A problem like this cannot be settled by any imposition by anybody. It can only be settled by settlement by the parties concerned. Whether conditions for a settlement are good at a particular moment or not depends upon that particular moment. As I have just pointed out, with threats of *jehad* and charges of deep conspiracy, there is no room for talks or settlement.

Q: You said that "we stand by the original resolution of UNCIP." Is Pakistan standing by its commitments of that resolution?

JN: If you like, I shall refer to some matters. We agreed to a plebiscite. Then the question arose about the conditions governing the plebiscite and in particular the question of withdrawal of troops from Kashmir. The UN Commission decided that all Pakistani troops should be withdrawn; first of all tribal folk and irregulars and then the regular army. After all the irregulars had been withdrawn and the regular Pakistan army was being withdrawn, the Indian army was supposed to begin withdrawal of the bulk of India's forces in Kashmir; but mind you, this obviously meant that a certain number of India's forces would remain there for security reasons. There might have been some argument as to what the bulk is and there was some argument. This was agreed to by all the parties

5. Iskandar Mirza.

concerned—UN Commission, Pakistan and India, that Pakistan takes away every single regular and irregular soldier from Kashmir State territory and India withdraws then the bulk of her forces leaving the minimum necessary for security.

Now Pakistan demands not that the bulk of the forces should be withdrawn but that there should be simultaneous withdrawal of all these forces. Of course, you will remember that the removal of the Pakistan forces from Kashmir can be a matter of a day or two or even a few hours. It is more formal than anything in the sense that they can easily push them in within twenty four hours in the same way as when the invasion took place. So it makes a vital difference. It is really a matter of Kashmir's sovereignty. It is as a recognition of Kashmir's sovereignty that we ask for their removal. Anyhow, the point is that India wishes to withdraw troops by agreement amongst all parties. That is point number one.

The second important point is that the present Kashmir Government will not only continue but will be recognised as sovereign for the whole of the State, even that part of the State territory which is at present in Pakistani occupation, and as a recognition of that fact, the plebiscite administrator was to be appointed formally by the Kashmir Government—formally only; the real choice would be no doubt of the United Nations, but to recognise the sovereignty of the Kashmir Government there, the Kashmir Government was going to appoint him. Now, in regard to both these matters, Pakistan has taken up an entirely different attitude; they want to go back upon those decisions made.

Q: As Pakistan is carrying on a regular propaganda for *jehad* against India, is the Government of India's decision still the same as previously that if there is an attack on Kashmir, it will be considered as an attack on India?

JN: Yes.

Q: Are we to understand that the question of the plebiscite will be left to the Kashmir Constituent Assembly?

JN: No. The Kashmir Constituent Assembly is essentially meant to give a certain constitutional background to the Government. Of course, in any Assembly like that, nobody can prevent it from expressing its views in regard to any matter, but so far as we are concerned, we have given our word in regard to the matter of this plebiscite and if the conditions are such as we have agreed to, we are perfectly prepared to go on with it.

Q: Unless both armies are withdrawn simultaneously, what guarantee is there that the Indian forces would not occupy the whole of Kashmir?

JN: It is the business of India to occupy the whole of Kashmir, if there is any danger.

Q: Is Kashmir an integral part of the Republic of India?

JN: Constitutionally yes.

Q: Has the UN recognised Kashmir as part of India factually and juridically?

JN: The United Nations Commission at least proceeded on that basis. Whether they have said so in so many words, I do not remember, but their whole discussion was on the basis that Kashmir legally was part of India and this is so unless something else happens.

Q: Has the Government any comments to offer on the apparently increasing emphasis that is being laid on Kashmir as a base for communism?

JN: As a base for communism? We have no comments to offer, nor do we think that there is any particular justification for that. In Kashmir as elsewhere there are some communist elements but I do not think it goes beyond that.

Q: The impression has gone abroad that Kashmir is being used by elements in India who are not tolerated here, that they cross the border and stir up trouble, that they are creating some sort of situation which may be used later on to declare Kashmir independent, as a sort of autonomous territory.

JN: I should have personally thought that Kashmir was free from this kind of thing than some other parts of India. There are small groups no doubt but you have to see the picture as a whole. I see no particular movement of that kind there.

Q: Will the Kashmir Constituent Assembly be representative not merely of the areas now under Shaikh Abdullah but also of the other parts of Kashmir under Pakistan occupation?

JN: No surely. It can represent only the areas from which people come, from which people are elected.

Q: Have you any comments on the statement of Mr Menzies⁶ made only three days ago that the trouble in Kashmir was a threat to Australia?⁷

JN: I would say that Mr Menzies was slightly exaggerating. Shall we go on to the next subject?...

6. Robert Gordon Menzies (1894-1978); Prime Minister of Australia since 1949.

7. On 9 March 1951, Menzies told the Australian Parliament that so long as the Kashmir dispute remained unsettled it would be "provocative and dangerous" and would be full of "the gravest menace to Australia" not only because of its influence on the world but because of its immediate effect upon the security of the Middle East.

2. Cable to B.N. Rau¹

Your telegram 121 of March 12th.² Our position in regard to Kashmir is exactly as stated before and we are not prepared to make slightest change in it or to consider any amendments of resolution put forward by USA and UK.³ We think that treatment accorded to us in this matter by UK and USA has been most unfair and we resent this kind of imposition upon us. We resent still more the kind of good advice that Jebb offers us on behalf of HMG.⁴ India is not interested in being a leader of Asia or a big power anywhere. We are not afraid of any question like Junagadh or Hyderabad being brought up for discussion. We want you therefore to make our position perfectly clear to Jebb and to anyone else interested. I have today made statement at press conference regarding Kashmir.⁵

Jebb's reference to UK acting largely on Indian advice in regard to Korea is extraordinary because UK, after largely accepting Indian advice at Commonwealth Conference, reversed its decision and acted contrary to it.⁶

Our private information from London is that UK Government regrets having gone so far on the Kashmir issue and wants to tone down as far as possible.

Jebb's information about recent army plot in Pakistan⁷ is, like much of his other information, far from the truth. Our information is that this had nothing to do with Communists, but no doubt Communists will be used as suitable cover.

1. New Delhi, 13 March 1951. JN Collection.
2. Rau reported a conversation with Gladwyn Jebb, the head of the British delegation.
3. The Anglo-American resolution, deprecating the proposed convening of a Constituent Assembly as inconsistent with earlier resolutions of the Security Council and of the UN Commission for India and Pakistan and affirming that a final disposition of Kashmir could be made only after an impartial plebiscite conducted under UN auspices, was introduced on 21 February 1951 and rejected by India on 1 March 1951. In an attempt to meet Indian objections, a revised version of the resolution was submitted by the British and US delegates on 21 March but this was also not accepted by India.
4. Jebb said that failure to resolve dispute would affect India's role in the UN to which HMG attached considerable importance and added that if India's emphasis on Pakistan's aggression was pursued, questions like Junagadh and Hyderabad would also be taken up.
5. See the preceding item.
6. Jebb said that on Korea, UK had acted largely on Indian advice and it was their view that India could and should be, and in fact was, the biggest power in Asia.
7. Jebb said that according to his information the recent army plot in Pakistan was inspired by Communists and that the plotters, resentful at delay over a settlement on Kashmir, had favoured turning to the Soviet Union for help.

3. Cable to B.N. Rau¹

Your telegram No. 129 dated 20th March.²

Draft resolution introduced by UK and USA delegations, in the light of statements made by Jebb and Gross.³ We are sending our preliminary reactions. We may add to this later.

2. Recent developments in Pakistan and 'Azad Kashmir'⁴ indicate more forcibly dangers of any failure to give adequate security to State. According to Pakistan Government, recent plot, involving high military officers, was due to desire to settle Kashmir dispute by revival of hostilities. Talk of Holy War, to which we have repeatedly referred but which sponsors of resolution continue to ignore, is as pervasive, persistent and impassioned as ever. No impartial person could expect us, in such circumstances, to leave to third party, however chosen, decision as to how State should be protected against recurrence, perhaps on wider scale, of horrors of October 1947.⁵ I would add that, according to our military intelligence and other sources, Pakistan reinforcements (troops and equipment) are moving up to ceasefire line. It is certain that any attack by Pakistan or 'Azad' areas of Kashmir will immediately result in full-scale war between India and Pakistan. Hence no responsible Government can take a step which might precipitate some action on part of Pakistan or 'Azad Kashmir' leading to disastrous consequences. It follows that though arbitration is to be limited to differences over demilitarisation, we are unable to modify our original stand. Discharge of our obligation to maintain security of State cannot be, in any circumstances, subject to verdict of one or more arbitrators and must be determined only with our concurrence. This applies to phasing of withdrawal of our forces, the quantum to be retained in the State after withdrawal, and their disposition.

1. New Delhi, 25 March 1951. JN Collection.
2. Rau indicated the changes made in the draft resolution which the UK and the US delegations proposed to place before the Security Council.
3. Jebb asked Rau on 21 March 1951 to make it clear "beyond all doubt" when the revised draft resolution was submitted to the Security Council that his Government would do everything in their power to prevent action which would damage the work of the Security Council. Ernest Gross of the American delegation also said that his Government believed that the Security Council could and should affirm that the final disposition of Kashmir would be made through a plebiscite under UN auspices. Both spoke after Rau's statement in the Council that "the external affairs of the Kashmir Government are within the control of the Indian Government...."
4. There was a conspiracy to overthrow Liaquat Ali Khan's Government. There was anti-Centre propaganda in East Bengal. Ghulam Abbas, leader of the Pakistan-sponsored 'Azad Kashmir' movement, had resigned and the movement was to be directed by a committee to be nominated by Abbas.
5. Rau spoke on these lines in the Security Council on 29 March 1951.

3. Both Jebb and Gross have referred, in their speeches, to your statement on authority and functions of Constituent Assembly.⁶ We are surprised that, in spite of explanation given by you, preamble to revised resolution should still reproduce corresponding parts of first resolution.⁷ Jebb's statement about what you said regarding Constituent Assembly is both unfair and unintelligible. Kashmir's accession to India is legally valid. This has never been questioned before, either by UNCIP or Security Council.

4. The tone and content of Jebb's speech appear to us to be specially offensive, and we should like you to draw attention to this in your speech. We cannot therefore accept amended resolution. We do not consider that a new UN representative will be able to achieve any better results than Dixon, but if Security Council is particular about it, we have no objection to such representative visiting India and Pakistan, to make a fresh attempt to assist, by suggestion, advice and mediation, how proposals regarding demilitarization under resolutions of 13th August 1948 and 5th January 1949, should be implemented, with due regard to assurances given to us. This will, however, be subject to our view expressed in paragraph 2 above regarding arbitration.

6. Repudiating the suggestion that the proposed Constituent Assembly was intended to prejudice the issues before the Security Council, Rau maintained that Kashmir, as "a unit of the Indian Federation, subject to Federal jurisdiction in respect of the broad categories of defence, external affairs and communications but completely autonomous in almost all other matters," was legally entitled to convene a Constituent Assembly, which would provide an elected legislature to which the executive could be made responsible.
7. The first resolution was adopted by the United Nations Commission for Kashmir, on 13 August 1948. See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 7, p. 289.

4. Cable to S. Radhakrishnan¹

Your personal telegram No. 34, dated 31st March.² As you are aware, Russia, following her previous practice, abstained from voting on latest Security Council resolution on Kashmir.³ In circumstances, we can hardly ask Moscow to do anything. To be quite frank, this attitude of silent aloofness has not been very pleasing.

1. New Delhi, 1 April 1951. JN Collection.
2. Radhakrishnan had asked whether he should speak to the Soviet authorities on Kashmir.
3. The Security Council adopted on 30 March 1951 the revised resolution submitted on 2 March, by eight votes (UK, USA, France, China, Netherlands, Turkey, Brazil and Ecuador) to nil, with India, Soviet Union and Yugoslavia abstaining.

5. India Will Meet the Challenge¹

I always look forward to coming here as it revives and refreshes me and makes me fitter to face the many burdens I have to carry. I have arranged this visit as a purely private one without any political intent and I want to stick to that decision as far as I can. But recently some developments have taken place which have affected Kashmir greatly and I cannot ignore them or refrain from referring to them when I meet my old colleagues in Srinagar.

Recently a resolution has been passed by the Security Council in regard to Kashmir.² I have occasion to express the views of the Government of India, which are in full accordance with the views of the Jammu and Kashmir Government, recently in Parliament.³ The original resolution sponsored by the USA and UK Governments in the Security Council⁴ has seemed to me most extraordinary and objectionable and as such as it can never be accepted. India has not accepted the Anglo-American resolution and will face all the consequences flowing from the passing of the resolution in the Security Council. The amended resolution,⁵ however, in some respects, marks an improvement, but nevertheless it has proceeded from a wrong premise and contains certain provisions which are completely unacceptable. The Arbitration Resolution is a challenge to the self-respect of the people of Kashmir, nay the people of India. India cannot carry out the resolution. I am confident that we shall meet the challenge effectively. In spite of our objection to this, the Security Council has passed it. This passing of the resolution does not lessen in any way the objections of the Government of India to it or change the attitude of the Government of India to it. So far as the people of Srinagar are concerned, they made their wishes quite clear in this matter not only yesterday, when they gave me a magnificent reception, but also during the last few years. I believe that the people of Srinagar in this matter reflect the feeling of the great majority of the people in the State. Many of them express themselves in angry terms.

1. Address to National Conference workers, Srinagar, 2 April 1951. *Speeches and Writings, January 1951 to June 1951*. PMS.
2. See *ante*, p. 369.
3. India's opposition to the amended Anglo-US resolution on Kashmir in the Security Council was made clear in Parliament by Nehru on 28 March 1951. "We cannot accept anything that flows from the basically wrong argument of the proposed resolution before the Security Council." See also pp. 506-521.
4. It was tabled on 20 January 1951.
5. See *ante*, pp. 367-368.

I can well understand the people's resentment at what has been done.⁶ I share this myself, but anger and resentment do not help us much. We have to make our minds clear about the policy we pursue and carry it out firmly whatever the consequences.

Three and a half years ago, in November 1947,⁷ I had given a pledge in the city of Srinagar to the people of Kashmir and I have often repeated that pledge. I stand by the pledge.

The people of Kashmir know well and the whole world should know it that India's policy is a peaceful one and we try our utmost to prevent war. That policy will continue to be followed everywhere unless India is forced into war by others. In Kashmir war is not of our seeking. It is thrust upon us by a ruthless invader. In the circumstances no self-respecting country can adopt a helpless, passive and quiet attitude. It was indeed obligatory for India to come to the rescue of the people of Kashmir. We discharged that obligation. We shall continue to do so as long as any danger threatens from any side or quarter. But at the same time we shall continue our quest for peace to explore all avenues leading to it.

The Security Council has not contributed in any manner to a peaceful settlement of the problem. For the first time, departure is made from the earlier stands of peaceful negotiation and mediation for solving the Kashmir question by imposing upon us something against our will.

The resolution passed by the Security Council has not helped in any way this search for a peaceful settlement. For the first time, ever since this trouble began a decision is sought to be imposed upon us against our will. This resolution is not only contrary in several aspects to the previous decisions of the Security Council including the August 1948 resolution of the UN Commission and the facts of the case, but also involves India's breaking her pledge to Kashmir. Such a resolution would hinder India from discharging her obligations to Kashmir and as such, India can never accept it.

Therefore we cannot carry out the resolution of the Security Council which we have opposed and not accepted. We cannot agree to any imposition or any arbitrement against our will. Nevertheless we will continue our search for a peaceful settlement and will welcome any help to this end.

Objection has been taken by some countries to the preparations for a Constituent Assembly in Kashmir. I cannot understand this objection by certain countries to holding the elections, when we have made it perfectly clear that this is an internal matter for Kashmir to decide herself. In no way does the

6. On 2 April 1951, a large procession of students and young men marched through the streets of Jammu to protest against the Anglo-US resolution on Kashmir.

7. On 11 November 1947, Nehru had given a pledge to the people, at a public meeting in Srinagar, that "as in the past, so in the future, Kashmir and India will stand together and face the enemy." See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 4, p. 321.

holding of elections challenge the security of the United Nations. We propose to continue these preparations and to hold the Constituent Assembly and thus this proposed Constituent Assembly will give a democratic basis to Jammu and Kashmir State and its Government.

The people of Kashmir State and indeed all the people of India have to face a situation, which is not only difficult, but requires firm and swift decision and demands all our wisdom and courage. We have to be firm in our resolve, wise in our decision, and united in action. We have to meet this new challenge to our self-respect and freedom. I have no doubt that we will meet it effectively.

I have learnt with regret that certain minor communal splinter groups in Jammu province are raising their ugly heads again and trying to create trouble. They cannot be tolerated. India stood against communalism of all kinds because it considered communalism an evil in itself and a challenge to the country. Hence communalism cannot be tolerated in any part of Kashmir. I hope that people will not be misled by these communal slogans and will realise once for all that communalism will only lead to a betrayal of our freedom and everything that we cherish and hold dear. Any person who indulges in communal activities not only does disservice to the nation but causes grave injury to his own narrow parochial interests which he seeks to advance.

I am happy to find progress in many directions in Kashmir since I visited it last.⁸ This is the surest way to building up this beautiful part of India. Kashmir has become a symbol of communal unity in many ways and all people in India have to live up to it.

8. He had been last in Srinagar from 28 to 30 October 1950.

6. To B.N. Rau¹

New Delhi
April 17, 1951

My dear B.N.,

... As for Kashmir, nothing much is happening and I rather doubt if much is going to happen in the near future. From information received from London, it appears that the UK Government is not at all anxious to do anything. In fact they want to tone down their part and not to irritate Indian opinion more than they have already done. So far as we are concerned, we have to do nothing in the Security Council till something happens. Meanwhile the Kashmir Government

1. B.N. Rau Papers, NMML. Extracts.

is going on with its preparations for the Constituent Assembly. Elections can only take place after the rains, that is round about September.

About Korea and the Far East, I do not see what positive proposal we can make at present. It is no good our asking China vaguely to do this or that.² The only possible basis that we can put forward is the basis of five principles enunciated by the UN,³ and this not only in the letter but in the spirit. We have asked Panikkar for an appraisal of the present position and are waiting for his reply.

The general attitude of the UK Foreign Secretary, Morrison, is rather more favourable to India than that of his predecessor.⁴ We shall keep in touch with him.

MacArthur's dismissal was certainly good and has relieved world tension somewhat.⁵ But I fear this will not lead to any marked change in US policy....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Rau suggested that India should try to find out through Panikkar whether and on what terms the Peking Government would be prepared to negotiate to enable the UN to get the war in Korea terminated.
3. On 11 January 1951, the ceasefire committee submitted a new formula designed to meet some of the demands set forth by Peking. The plan had five parts: (1) an immediate ceasefire; (2) a political meeting for restoring peace; (3) withdrawal by stages of foreign troops, with appropriate arrangements for the Korean people regarding their Government; (4) arrangements for unification and administration of Korea; and (5) a conference, after the ceasefire, of the United Kingdom, the United States, the Soviet Union, and People's China, "to settle Far Eastern problems" including the status of Formosa and China's representation in the United Nations.
4. On 9 March 1951, Herbert Morrison succeeded Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary.
5. On 11 April 1951, General MacArthur relinquished the command of the United Nations forces to General Ridgway.

7. To S.M. Abdullah¹

New Delhi
April 28, 1951

My dear Shaikh Sahib,

Thank you for your letter. I had hoped that you might be coming here, because I wanted to speak to you about a number of matters. I have been rather distressed at the reports of some of the speeches you have made, which I think, are

1. JN Collection.

likely to be used by our opponents.² Your references to the Yuvraj especially were rather unfortunate, more especially as he must necessarily remain quiet.

The Praja Parishad of Jammu has given and may give trouble.³ But I think you add to its importance by referring to it or to Prem Nath Dogra⁴ publicly. I do not think it is difficult to deal with the Praja Parishad or with Prem Nath Dogra. I met the latter yesterday and spoke to him frankly and strongly. To me he said that he would carry out any directions that I gave him and promised to behave well in future. I do not, of course, accept his word. Nevertheless, I think he can be controlled by the right methods.

In view of the difficult international situation vis-a-vis Kashmir, I do think that no reference should be made to the Constituent Assembly deciding the question of accession.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Speaking on 26 April Shaikh Abdullah expressed pain and indignation that the Praja Parishad organization was now conspiring to "scuttle our ship in the mid-ocean." He said that so far as Maharaja Hari Singh was concerned he was not going to return. The people of Jammu were taken to the "jaws of death" and it was the duty of every citizen to destroy such a reactionary organization as the Praja Parishad.
3. See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 10, p. 239.
4. (1882-1972); a leading RSS worker in Jammu and President of the Praja Parishad at this time.

8. To Lord Mountbatten¹

New Delhi
May 3, 1951

Dear Dickie,

Thank you for your letter of the 25th April which I was very happy to receive. It is extraordinarily good of you to take all the trouble to see Gordon Walker and others.² I am sure that your visit to these people must have done them some good or, at any rate, brought a ray of light into their twilight minds.

But you appear to be a little optimistic. Repeatedly we have been told by someone in the UK Government that Sir Gladwyn Jebb had exceeded his

1. JN Collection.
2. In his letter Mountbatten claimed to have warned Gordon Walker that if Britain questioned the legality of Kashmir's accession he might have to speak out.

instructions and that they would point this out to him. Nevertheless Jebb goes on "exceeding his instructions" and has a peculiar way of saying things which we find exceedingly irritating. I am afraid that feeling in India over this Kashmir issue, in relation to the UK, has risen fairly high. I suppose we are functioning on some entirely different planes of thought and belief. The English newspapers, or most of them, condemn us in the strongest language.³ This is not of course pleasant to read, but it leaves us completely unrepentant. In fact, it produces a contrary impression. The fact of the matter is that right from the beginning many people in England, including Attlee, were firmly convinced that Kashmir being predominantly Muslim, must necessarily go to Pakistan. They could only think in terms of the division of India by religion and they seem to think this followed from the Partition. In our minds this Partition was a painful necessity, but at no time were we prepared to accept religion as the basis for division. Once we did so, the whole structure of our State would be imperilled because of the 40 million Muslims here. Even Pakistan would be affected, but not so much because anyhow they function as a religious State. Their whole Constitution says as much and their behaviour acts upto it. In East Bengal, although conditions have quietened down and large numbers of migrants have returned from West Bengal, the Hindus there live a suppressed and apprehensive life. They have no sensation of equal citizenship. Daily we receive reports of petty attacks and dacoities on Hindu houses and unfortunately of rapes on women. This is not so much a matter of sex but just to frighten people and subdue them.

Anyhow, for us to accept at any time that Muslims in a sense belong to Pakistan would be fatal for us. Of course, if the people of Kashmir want to go to Pakistan and declare as such, then it is a different matter and their choice has to be given effect to. But even so, we are not prepared for the propaganda of bigotry and hatred to flood Kashmir and result in civil strife.

Kashmir thus becomes for us a vital issue involving a principle which affects our whole future existence. Any argument based merely on Kashmiris being Muslim will inevitably be rejected by us.

Another factor that is not appreciated in England or elsewhere is the long struggle in Kashmir for freedom against the Maharaja's rule. In this struggle, Shaikh Abdullah and his National Conference took the lead and functioned continuously. Most of those who are with Pakistan now opposed this struggle and sided with reaction in Kashmir then. For us, therefore, it is a contest between progress and reaction. For the Pakistani leaders, who never took part in any movement for freedom anywhere, and invariably sided with the previous *status quo*, to talk about freeing Kashmir is unmitigated nonsense.

3. For example, on 19 April 1951, *The Evening Standard* of London wrote: "How Mr Nehru can still maintain that Kashmir is irrevocably part of India and at the same time agree that a need exists for a plebiscite, which in fact he refuses to allow, is one more of the contradictions which surround the self-appointed peace-worker."

During the last seven or eight months, ever since Dixon went, the tone of the Pakistan Press and of most of its leaders has been so vulgar and aggressive in regard to Kashmir as to be past all understanding. We are daily threatened with war. How they expect us to react in a friendly way to these daily threats and curses is beyond me. We react as normal human beings and decide not to be cowed down by these threats, whatever happens. I may be partial and I might lack objectivity in this matter, but I am convinced that Pakistan has followed a crooked course throughout in Kashmir.

I am afraid that it is the common belief in India today that the UK have, for some reason or other, decided to give their full support to Pakistan over this Kashmir affair. This naturally results in straining the good relations between India and the UK. Whatever Attlee, Gordon Walker and others might think of the merits of the case, they should realise with certainty that India has been deeply hurt by the UK's attitude. Further that no amount of pressure is going to make India change her policy.

We have just heard that Graham⁴ has been appointed the UN Mediator, or whatever he is called, for Kashmir. We have had no official intimation of this. When we hear officially, we shall send a formal reply. That reply is likely to be that we do not propose to help in any way in implementing the UN resolution on Kashmir which we have rejected. But if Graham wants to come here, we shall of course talk to him.

A few days ago, Bullitt,⁵ a senior US diplomat and the man whom Roosevelt sent to Russia as their first Ambassador, was having lunch with me. The Yuvraj of Kashmir also happened to be present. Bullitt is supposed to be one of the most experienced American diplomats and he has travelled very widely all over the world. Suddenly he put a question to the Yuvraj, which took his and my breath away. He asked him: "Are you still having some trouble with those Moslems?" As the Yuvraj hesitated, he added, "You know this shooting business." This question displayed a depth of knowledge which was amazing.

An American Senator, named Green,⁶ who is, I believe, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, was in Delhi some months ago. He and his wife were having a meal with me when I referred to Mohenjodaro and explained that this was in Sind. He did not know where Sind was. Then I told

4. Frank P. Graham (1886-1972); President, University of North Carolina, 1930-49; appointed UN Mediator for India and Pakistan in relation to the Kashmir dispute on 30 April 1951.
5. William Christian Bullitt (1891-1967); Special Assistant to Secretary of State, 1933; American Ambassador to Russia, 1933-36, and to France, 1936-41; President Roosevelt's Special Representative in Near East, 1941; Special Assistant Secretary, Navy, 1942-43.
6. Theodore Francis Green (1867-1966); US Senator, 1936-61; Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1951-59.

him that it was in Pakistan now. He looked blank. But his wife asked, "what part of India is Pakistan?" Mr Green, I might add, has recently been holding forth about India, Pakistan and Kashmir. I need hardly say that what he has said does not display either knowledge or intellectual brilliance.

It is astonishing how many fools there are in important places in this world.

Edwina came here and went and during her stay not only my house but Delhi was livelier and brighter.⁷ That is the disadvantage of having her because, when she goes away, that brightness also goes. I tried my best to induce her to be quiet and restful, but I fear I did not succeed. I felt unhappy about it and a little conscience-stricken. But what is one to do with her, when she insists on good works all the time?

I am glad V.P. Menon has gone to Orissa as Governor,⁸ although it is for the short period of three months. Asaf Ali is just leaving for England by sea.⁹ Possibly you might see him there.

We are passing through some kind of a political crisis here and I have been rather terribly overworked because of it. The crisis is not governmental, but rather a Congress political crisis. All kinds of committee meetings are being held and I spend 10 to 12 hours a day on these meetings and then try to find sometime for my normal work.

I showed your letter to Rajaji.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

7. She visited India in March 1951 after a tour of West and East Africa lasting six weeks. She went to Burma for St. John Ambulance inspection work, came back to Delhi on her way to England.
8. Menon assumed office as acting Governor of Orissa on 6 May in place of Asaf Ali, who proceeded on leave for three months.
9. Asaf Ali sailed for London on 5 May.

9. To G.L. Mehta¹

New Delhi
May 16, 1951

My dear Gaganvihari,

Thank you for sending me K.C. Mahindra's² letter. There is no doubt that public opinion in England about Kashmir is almost wholly against us. This is

1. JN Collection.
2. Chairman, Mahindra and Mahindra Limited, Bombay, and of various other concerns.

something beyond the reach of any public relations staff. It is mixed up with high international affairs and the British Foreign Office's policy in the matter. Also with the opinion held by the British right from the beginning that Kashmir must go to Pakistan. Because we come in the way, they get angry. Pakistan again is a part of their Middle Eastern Policy which, I think, is futile.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To S.M. Abdullah¹

New Delhi
May 22, 1951

My dear Shaikh Saheb,

Thank you for your letter of May 19th.

There are no two opinions, so far as we are concerned, about the importance of the Constituent Assembly and that we must proceed with it, despite all opposition. Also nobody can prevent the Constituent Assembly pronouncing itself in regard to any question including that of accession. The only question is one of wise tactics. You will remember that it was stated on our behalf at Lake Success that the Constituent Assembly was not meant to decide the question of accession. If we say anything else now, then it not only goes against our previous statements at Lake Success, but also gives a handle to Zafrullah and company to say that we have been misleading the United Nations and are carrying out a deep intrigue. That will do us no good. We have to fight against widespread propaganda against us in America and England.

Yesterday I noticed in a Delhi newspaper an item of news that some people who call themselves friends of Kashmir, were organising a black flag demonstration for Graham for his arrival in Delhi. On enquiry I found that the person behind it is a member of the Socialist Party here. I have conveyed to him that this will be very unwise and would embarrass us greatly. He has agreed to call it off.

I feel that while our attitude towards the UN resolution should be firm and unyielding, we should not be discourteous to Graham in any way.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

11. Britain and Kashmir¹

I confess that any approach to us by the UK High Commissioner² or the UK Government in regard to Kashmir irritates me. I think that they have lost the right to advise us in this matter. Their attitude, in regard to Kashmir, has been consistently hostile to ours. Indeed, from all the accounts that I have received from various sources, the UK has taken the lead in this matter in the Security Council. The Afghan Ambassador,³ who saw me yesterday, told me so. Having long ago made up their minds that Kashmir must go to Pakistan, they have consistently followed a policy to that end. They try to cover this up by a seeming impartiality. But that veil grew thinner and thinner till it was worn away completely. I should like to make this clear to the UK High Commissioner, whenever he raises the question of Kashmir. Because of this, we cannot attach much importance to any advice that the UK Government give us on the subject of Kashmir, unless that is justified independently on the merits.

When we are asked to use our influence with Shaikh Abdullah, I should like to ask in return what influence UK Government has used to stop the outbursts in Pakistan, both in the Press and platform, against India and the constant threat of war that is held out there.⁴ We have drawn repeated attention to this in Karachi and at Lake Success. I do not think a single reference has been made in any of the speeches at Lake Success, except B.N. Rau's, to these outbursts. Instead, the UK representative has spoken in a lofty manner about India's failings and the impropriety of having a Constituent Assembly in Kashmir. This is even brought into the Security Council resolution. If all this is not gross partisanship, I do not know what else it is.

I think it should be made perfectly clear to the UK High Commissioner that we hold strong views on this question and we have felt more and more that the UK Government's attitude in regard to Kashmir has been partisan and has been deliberately aimed at influencing the Security Council against India. We have not accepted the last Security Council resolution and we do not intend to accept it or to act upto it in any way.⁵ The Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir will be held as intended in spite of the objections raised by Pakistan or any other country. We have already made it clear what the Government of India's attitude is in regard to this Assembly and that, so far as

1. Note to Secretary-General, MEA, 26 May 1951. JN Collection. Extracts.

2. Archibald Nye.

3. Najibullah Khan.

4. See *post*, p. 389.

5. See *ante*, pp. 367-369.

we are concerned, the Constituent Assembly was not and is not intended to prejudice the issue before the Security Council. But it should be clearly understood that a great deal of feeling has been aroused on this issue because of the resolution of the Security Council and the part played by the UK Government's representative in shaping it. In Kashmir passions are even stronger on this issue. We cannot compel a people or influence them in any way in order to prevent them from saying what they feel.

As a matter of fact, I have written to Shaikh Abdullah more than once on this subject and suggested to him to be careful in making statements about the Constituent Assembly, more especially in regard to accession.⁶ But this is between us and Shaikh Abdullah.

We are certainly not prepared to make any public statement as desired by the UK High Commissioner. There is no occasion for it....

6. Shaikh Abdullah declared on 26 April 1951 that the Constituent Assembly would ratify the question of the accession of the State to India.

12. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

New Delhi
June 2, 1951

Nan dear,

I have asked Bajpai to send you a copy of a note of mine on Kashmir² and a record of his interview with the US Counsellor, Steere, here.³ I want you to know how exactly we are feeling about this. You need not take any immediate steps in the matter. But if occasion arises, you should make clear to the State Department how we feel about it.

1. JN Collection.

2. See the preceding item.

3. Bajpai had explained to Steere on 31 May 1951, as had already been done by India's representatives in the UN, that Kashmir had the right to formulate its own Constitution and to elect its own legislature and that India had no right to interfere. When asked by Steere as to whether the convening of the Constituent Assembly and the passage of a resolution on the accession question would prejudice the holding of a plebiscite, Bajpai answered in the negative, and added that Graham would be received with due courtesy in India.

We feel that the attitude that the UK and USA have taken up in the Security Council in regard to Kashmir grows more and more partisan and, instead of helping a solution, is making such solution exceedingly difficult. The speeches delivered in the Security Council by the UK and USA representatives might be delivered by the Pakistan delegate. So far as we are concerned, we have gone to the uttermost limits of concession. We shall stand by all we have said in the Security Council at any time, but further we will not go. We have rejected the last resolution of the Security Council and we are not going to implement it. We shall meet Graham of course if he comes and treat him with all courtesy. But we shall have to make clear that we stand by our rejection of that UN resolution.

As regards the Constituent Assembly for Kashmir, we shall certainly go ahead with it, whatever the feelings of Whitehall or the State Department might be. This is not meant to come in the way of the Security Council, but of course every action has some effect. As a matter of fact, the speeches delivered by the UK and USA representatives in the Security Council certainly come in the way of a settlement. To ask us to put an end to the Constituent Assembly is to ask us to do something which we cannot do and is to interfere in the internal affairs of India.⁴ We are functioning correctly on the legal and constitutional as well as the moral and practical plane and we see no reason whatever to change our policy, however others might feel about it.

I might inform you that Kashmir has made progress on many fronts. The economic position is much better, the harvest has been good and tourists are pouring in almost as they used to in the past. Public works have been undertaken and generally there has been progress all round. This contrasted with the 'Azad Kashmir' areas which, from all accounts, are in a bad way. The land reforms in Kashmir have produced a great impression among the peasantry. There are of course many difficulties there and many internal conflicts, but that is something we have to face everywhere.

With love from
Jawahar

4. Despite Rau's assurance in the Security Council on 29 May 1951 that the Constituent Assembly was not intended to prejudice the issues before the Security Council, the Council reiterated that India and Pakistan should do everything in their power to ensure that the authorities in Kashmir did not disregard the Council.

13. To V.K. Krishna Menon¹

New Delhi
June 2, 1951

My dear Krishna,

I am very much worried by your repeated relapses and illness. I feel more and more that you should take long rest in order to become fit. I would undoubtedly do so if I was unwell.

A note of mine on Kashmir² and a report of an interview that Bajpai had with the UK and USA representatives here in regard to Kashmir³ are being sent to you separately. I want you to know exactly how we feel about these matters. I am exceedingly irritated at the attitude that the UK⁴ and the USA⁵ continue to pursue about Kashmir. From time to time you have given me an impression that the UK really do not mean what people think they mean or what their representative in the Security Council says. Nevertheless, the representative goes on saying the same thing and all that I can conclude is that he represents the UK completely.

I should like the UK Government to realise that this attitude of theirs and of the USA is making the situation much more difficult. They are functioning practically as the advocates of Pakistan in a completely partisan way. They do not admonish Pakistan for calls for *jehad* and war that continue there. But they take us to account for having a Constituent Assembly. We resent this attitude and this interference in our internal affairs under pressure from Pakistan. We are going on with this Constituent Assembly anyhow, whatever Whitehall or the State Department might feel.

I do not want you to make a special pilgrimage to Attlee or to Morrison to explain all this. For the moment I want you to know how we are feeling. If occasion arises, you can explain this to Attlee or Morrison.

I am going to Srinagar for two or three days tomorrow morning. There is a meeting of their National Conference.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML.

2. See *ante*, pp. 379-380.

3. See the preceding item.

4. The British delegate, Gladwyn Jebb, said that rejection of the resolutions and the procedure which the Government of India pledged themselves to follow would inevitably create a painful impression in the United Nations as a whole.

5. The United States delegate, Ernest Gross, said that if India were permitted to convene the Assembly she "would not be adhering fully to the spirit of its commitments."

14. Kashmir and the Constituent Assembly¹

Always, when I say something here or talk about Kashmir, the question that arises before me is, in what capacity I should speak and where I should lay more stress. Should I talk to you as a Kashmiri? Should I speak from my heart or from my mind? Should I let emotions sway me or be influenced by the pressures of love and the storm of emotions that threaten to overwhelm me? Or should I speak calmly, bearing in mind that by sheer chance I am in a position of great responsibility these days and speak from that high position? Shall I speak in the voice of the Government of India or in that of Jawaharlal? That does not mean that in this matter, there is much difference between the two voices. But still, difference does come in between what a responsible Government says and what the heart speaks out of emotion. I want to make an effort, especially on this occasion, not to let my emotions sway me too much. I do not know how far I shall succeed because the pressure is great and I would like to speak calmly and in a responsible manner.

I am able to visit Kashmir off and on and whenever I come here, my heart is happy and draws fresh strength because I am weighed down by my responsibilities. A position in Government is the most difficult, which has not only troubled me but in many people's view, changed me a little too. Only others can bear witness to this. It is obvious that man changes with responsibilities and new experiences and I too must have changed. But when I go to a few places in India and especially when I come to Kashmir, I realize that though I have certainly changed a little, a little of the old fire still burns in me, the old enthusiasm and the capacity to work at big tasks still remain. Please have pity on me, you can show your enthusiasm later. That is because though I have had varied experiences in life and in jail there is no bigger jail sentence than a position in Government. There are enormous responsibilities and difficulties and especially when the question looms large as to whether one is fulfilling the dreams that one had, and finds thousands of obstacles in the way, then one is in a terrible dilemma. Is one to leave one's position and run away or give up the dreams and principles of a life-time? This is the dilemma. Anyhow a way does emerge somehow and if it does not, then the individual enmeshed in the tangle becomes useless. I do not know what will happen to me. But I do realize that time has not yet come for me. When that time comes and I and the others begin to believe that I am no longer capable of doing good work, due to pressures of old age or any other reason, then perhaps I shall ask you to let

1. Speech at a session of the National Conference, Srinagar, 4 June 1951. AIR Tapes, NMML. Extracts.

me spend my last days in peace in some corner of these mountains. But perhaps that day will never come because for people who walk on the path that you and I and many of us have travelled on, there is no resting place where they can call a halt and relax. Their resting place is life's last moment and till then, their convictions pull them and force them to do the work that they have chosen, for as long as possible, because the tasks are never ending. The great tasks of a great nation go on forever and the most that an individual can do is to carry them forward with all his might and perhaps succeed in a small measure. And when he has done his duty till the end, to draw his last breath engaged in those tasks. There can be no greater satisfaction for a human being than this.

Anyhow, I am able to visit Kashmir sometimes and mostly for a day or two because I cannot get away for longer duration. But even two days make a great deal of difference, firstly by seeing these mountains but more by meeting the people here and discussing their problems and by seeing how you and I are engaged together in the task of writing the history of Kashmir at the moment. It infuses a new strength just like the lives of the great infuse new strength in human beings. Please remember that man can rise only as high as his tasks will permit him to and small men engaged in big tasks gain in stature. Mahatma Gandhi, a great man, came to India. You are at least familiar with his name. He engaged us in big tasks and raised the stature of small men like us.

So I come here and especially in the last three or three and a half years whenever I came, I have been trying to judge how much progress we have made and where we have been slack. There is slackness and weakness and at the same time strength too.

It is easy to criticise and find fault and it would be absolutely wrong to deny that there are no defects. There are numerous defects and mistakes are made. It is necessary for us to rectify those mistakes or to point them out but one must not fail to see what is happening or ignore the larger picture. We must not become so engrossed in one corner of a stream as to forget where the stream is going. So I have tried to understand a little where the stream of Kashmir's life has been going during the last three or four years—in the right direction or wrong—in spite of the fact, it is obvious, that there are thousands of difficulties and the people are not fully confident in their minds about the future. So I found, as you can see for yourselves, that there has been tremendous progress in this period in Kashmir in spite of all these problems. There has been progress in practically all directions, whether you take trade or production of essential commodities. A year or two ago there were tremendous shortages. These days the position of food is also pretty good. In fact, a few days ago, Shaikh Abdullah informed me that he was sending twenty thousand maunds of rice as a gift to Bihar which is in the grip of terrible difficulties. It had a tremendous impact on the people of Bihar. This is the sort of thing that adds to our strength—helping one another in times of difficulties. But I am reminding

you of this not to show you that Bihar got help from you but to point out that you were in a position to do so—you have made such great progress here. There has been progress in education too. A very good university has been established here. I have heard that there is progress in school education. I attach a great deal of importance to education because ultimately it is the students in schools and colleges today who will build the Kashmir of tomorrow. Transport services are very essential to the life of Kashmir. There has been a tremendous difference made in the transport system of Kashmir. So I find change and progress wherever I go though I can observe many defects too, just as in any other part of India. But the trend is towards progress.

Something very fundamental happened here a few days ago and that was the land legislation which has changed the entire land tenure system.² This is a great thing because land is the important issue in most countries of Asia. In India, we had made up our minds nearly twenty years ago to abolish the zamindari and jagirdari systems. We had incorporated it in our programme. Anyhow, we did not have the reins of Government in our hands then—we could only put it down on paper. When we came to power, we tried to put it into practice and we did do something but somehow we have got so entangled in legal complications that it is taking a long time and has not been completed till today.

You have taken the matter up and gone about it very rapidly. It is your good fortune and I congratulate you. Moreover you took up these big problems at a time when any Government would have been justified in saying that it was not the proper time to handle such large issues, when the enemy was at the door-step. You could have dealt with the enemy first and then thought about other things. Any Government would have been justified in saying this though it would not have been very wise. But your Government took up these matters with great wisdom and farsightedness and did the right thing because it added to your strength apart from alleviating the misery of the people....

The one fundamental thing about Kashmir which concerns all of us is that the national movement in Kashmir which came to the fore years ago was not communal in nature. It welcomed everyone. How far they put the principle into practice is a different matter. Some may have been led astray sometimes. But it has been a fundamental principle for years in India which Mahatma Gandhi has always stressed and based all his movements on it. It has gained great importance in the last 18-20 years. So it pains me greatly if I hear the voice of communalism raised in connection with this State. I had thought that

2. The Big Landed Estate Abolition Act in 1951 extinguished the right of ownership held by a landlord owning more than 182 *kanals* (22.75 acres). The expropriated land was to be transferred in full ownership to the tillers to the maximum of 160 *kanals* (20 acres).

after undergoing so much suffering and dividing India into two and after seeing a great deal of bloodshed, we would have at least learnt this lesson not to fall into the same error again. If Pakistan wants to follow that path, let them do so. They became a separate nation by following that path.

I do not wish to interfere in Pakistan's affairs. It is a free country and can do what it likes. But I am convinced that by following the path that they have taken, no country can ultimately make progress because it is a path which reduces the stature of human beings and of nations. For a while certainly they may make a noise but ultimately they will have to pay the price. Anyhow, what happens in Pakistan is not my responsibility but what happens in India is certainly my responsibility and I am amazed whenever communal cries and slogans are raised in India as it shows that people have not learnt a lesson and act wrongly under undesirable pressures.

People are of three types. One type consists of first-rate people who learn from the experience of others. They learn from historical experience to do the right thing and follow the right path. The second are those who learn from their own experience. It is usually the moderately intelligent human beings who learn from their own experience. The third are those who learn neither from the experience of others nor from their own. You can call them by whatever name you like but actually they are absolutely no good and useless and undoubtedly will come to grief. So I am amazed that in these communal matters, there are people who have not learnt a lesson from our terrible experiences and still speak in the same voice.

I had come here about six or eight weeks ago and stopped in Jammu on my way back.³ There were many people lined up on both sides of the road to welcome me and I was grateful for their love. But I heard some slogans and saw some banners there which astonished me greatly that there are people even now willing to raise such issues where anyone with a little bit of intelligence can understand that they will only damage their own province. I would say that such people are narrow-minded. Their ideas show their narrow-mindedness. I was amazed to see what was happening and I mentioned it there. We have to understand that this kind of thing helps Pakistan. If anyone wants to help Pakistan, certainly he has the right to do so and you and I can face the consequences. It is simple. But if they do not wish to help Pakistan and then say such things which strengthen Pakistan's argument, what can we do about that except to feel sad that there can be such fools and to take action to prevent people from being led astray by such wrong slogans?...

We must be prepared in every way—militarily and otherwise, in mind and body. Another way of being prepared is to keep doing our work and make

3. Nehru had visited Srinagar from 1 to 3 April 1951.

ourselves economically more well-off and gradually show to the world the stuff of which Kashmir is made and how we run the State. If anyone were to compare the situation which exists in Kashmir today—its law and order, Government and food supplies, etc—with the situation on the other side of the ceasefire line which is wrongly called 'Azad Kashmir', it will be pretty obvious that there is a world of difference between the two. There is absolutely no comparison and you must see the condition of the poor people who live in the so-called 'Azad Kashmir' after Pakistan took over. You must keep up with the progress you have made here and the more you progress in your daily lives and in your work, and the Government functions smoothly, the stronger you will become because the basic thing is that only you can determine the future of Kashmir—you and I—and if anyone thinks that they can decide the fate of the forty millions on a piece of paper, either here or in Pakistan or elsewhere, they are quite mistaken. It is foolish because the people of Kashmir have some spirit in them. If they had lost that, it is obvious that others could have manipulated them as they liked. But the experience of the last three or four years shows that the spirit of the people is alive. Ultimately the fate of nations is decided and even their constitutions are written not with pen and ink. They are determined by the courage and sacrifice of the nations and sometimes written with the blood of the people...

There is much talk of the Constituent Assembly which you have decided to elect in order to draft your Constitution. You have recently adopted a resolution for the Working Committee to chalk out a programme of action to be placed before the Constituent Assembly.⁴ You have adopted the right way of going about this matter. It has to be done and whatever discussions or debates may go on at Lake Success, there is no reason why we should give up doing our duty. The fact is that this should have been done years ago. Even before the Pakistani attack, Shaikh Saheb and I had had talks on this subject because that is the only way to deal with national issues. Anyhow, after that came the attack by Pakistan and in spite of that, it was again talked about in 1948 but the moment was not right. It is obvious that with a war going on the situation was rather difficult and so it was not done then. Therefore this is not a new idea taken up to annoy the other side. It is a basic thing which you had to do and unfortunately it had to be postponed till now. Ultimately last year you

4. A Proclamation issued on 30 April 1951 ordered elections for a Constituent Assembly for Jammu and Kashmir which would be constituted "forthwith", for the purpose of drawing up a Constitution. It stated that constituencies would be formed with an electorate of nearly 40,000 in each constituency; that the franchise would be exercised by all State subjects who are not less than 21 years of age and fulfilling certain residential qualifications; and that voting would be by direct and secret ballot.

decided that the time had come to implement it. By a coincidence I was here those days and I was happy to hear about your decision because it had been in my mind for years and I had been urging you to do it quickly.

I had no idea that anybody could have any objections to this, either the Security Council or any other country. It was possible that the Government of Pakistan or its people might have objected. But I was not unduly bothered about their opinion nor was I responsible to them. But I did not think for a moment that anyone else could object. After all, we were electing an Assembly of people's representatives to decide about the form of Government in our country. This has been laid down even in the UN Charter. Why should they object if we try to implement it? What right do they have to object to whatever we may do in our own country? It is a strange thing. I did not even think of it. Anyhow, gradually there were protests and a great deal of noise was made in Pakistan. If you have been reading the Pakistani newspapers in the last five or six months or listened to the statements of their leaders, it is pretty obvious that they have lost all control over their tongues and minds over this Kashmir issue. They have been saying such meaningless, foolish things in the last few months that it seems as if it was a concerted effort to discredit it and not an isolated example of protest. Perhaps they feel that if they make a lot of noise and use threats of *jehad*, etc, India will be shaken and even if that does not happen, it is bound to have an effect on other countries of Europe and America, which would help them. Perhaps this was the idea, I do not know. I am amazed at the whole thing. Whatever they may feel, do they think all this shouting is going to influence us? If they think that we will get scared, it is childish. The effect of all this can only be to strengthen our resolve to confront them with redoubled vigour. We certainly feel angry that such stupid things should be said and an effort made to produce wrong impressions in the world.

In short, this matter of the Constituent Assembly that you have taken is extremely important in more than one way. After all, how long can we wait for a decision by the Security Council? We do not wish to stand in its way. But that does not mean that we should bring the work of the entire country to a standstill and wait for somebody to reactivate us. That is very strange. We have to do something and it is obvious that the thing to be done, legally and emotionally, is to have a Constituent Assembly and it is your duty to do this work with all your might....

After all, we have to shape our foreign policy looking to the world situation as a whole. You may have read in the American and British newspapers that they are rather unhappy with me. They write that whereas in the matter of Korea, Jawaharlal becomes very peace-loving and wants us to come to an agreement and this and that, but when it comes to Kashmir, he forgets all these principles and sings a different song. They are unhappy because we did not accept the last proposal of the Security Council and flatly refused to abide

by it.⁵ So they say that Jawaharlal talks big on the Korean question but on Kashmir, his sights are fixed very low. As far as I can understand, I have acted according to only one principle, both in Korea and in Kashmir. I shall always try to follow that principle because in my view, it will have a beneficial effect on the world.

So, we told Pakistan clearly that we shall not fight. But that did not mean that we would accept whatever they said. We said we wish to find a solution by some other means but in the last five or six months, there has been a tremendous hue and cry in Pakistan for a *jehad*. Now what am I to say except that if they undertake *jehad*, they will be answered in kind and will be defeated. The problem is that there is a slight difference in our experience and the lessons we have been taught. We learnt something at the feet of Mahatma Gandhi, though we did not learn everything that he taught because we were stupid. His lesson was to keep our voices lowered as far as possible, and speak in civilized tones and it is by no means a sign of strength to scream like fishwives. We must make a firm resolve and abide by it. The other side has been taught just the opposite and perhaps it does have an impact on other countries. But ultimately, there is no doubt that strength lies not in loud voices but in our actions.

All right, now I mentioned the last proposal made by the Security Council six weeks or two months ago. It was a very strange proposal, presented by the Americans and the British. Whatever had been decided earlier was forgotten in that proposal or there was an attempt to annul them, at least some of them and some of the clauses were totally unacceptable to a free and respectable nation. We told them clearly, first of all, that they cannot annul whatever had been decided upon earlier and secondly, that we could not accept some of the things that they were proposing. Even if they pressurized the Security Council into accepting that proposal by virtue of their majority, we shall neither accept it nor put it into practice. It has been made quite clear to them. The difficulty is that some of these countries have got into the habit of getting things done the way they want by putting pressure on others and if this method fails with any country, they get rather annoyed. So when we said this quite clearly and openly, they were surprised and a little disbelieving. But I think by now they ought to be convinced that we will put into practice whatever we have said. One of the proposals was in regard to arbitration on the Kashmir issue. There have been long arguments and mediators came, a Commission was appointed, the Security Council scrutinized it. All this happened and yet there was no success, whatever

5. India did not accept the Security Council resolution of 21 March 1951 and said that the resolution of August 1948 had made it clear that the stages by which the bulk of the Indian forces were to be withdrawn, and the strength of the Indian forces retained, were matters for agreement solely between the UN Commission and the Indian Government and that Pakistan, as the invader, had no right to be consulted.

the reason may have been. Now it is a strange thing that one individual should be the arbitrator of the destinies of millions. Will any nation be prepared to accept this unless it is afraid? It is absolutely impossible and totally absurd. It has never been done to my knowledge in the Security Council or before that, even in the League of Nations. We had taken the matter to the Security Council to stop the fighting in Kashmir and were told this. It was obvious that we could not accept this and so we told them clearly. True, we had agreed in the beginning to a mediator coming to advise us. We were prepared to listen to good advice. But nothing much came out of it. There were no results because from the beginning, when the matter went up to the Security Council, they have never considered the issue properly nor come out with the right answers. They have been groping in the dark. They can come up with a proper solution only if they understand the problem. How can they find a solution if they cannot grasp the problem? So they were unsuccessful. Anyhow, even now we are prepared to listen if anyone wishes to talk to us but we cannot accept any arbitration in the face of threats. The regret is that the big Powers with whom we wish to have friendly relations are following a wrong course of action, either because they are influenced by Pakistan's propaganda, or it is their over-all policy. But we are not concerned with it in Kashmir.

Just now I spoke about the Constituent Assembly. I shall not repeat what I said but I shall certainly say that it is a proper thing to do. In these last three and a half years your progress in this direction has been halting. But it had to be done. It was an old idea which you were implementing now. People cannot tolerate that we want to do this and we are not prepared to give the right to any other country, not even to the Security Council to do something in Kashmir without our permission. No one has the right to interfere. Whatever happened in the Security Council earlier was accepted by us and now they have adopted a new line which does not have our acceptance. This is no way of going about this matter and we are not prepared to accept their decisions which do not have our prior concurrence.

I have already hinted at yet another thing. There are many aspects of this problem. I am not speaking as the Prime Minister of India now but as Jawaharlal. Obviously for many reasons I wish that there should be a close relationship between India and Kashmir. But apart from this, I have always been convinced, and I think I am not deceiving myself when I say this, that Kashmir will be ruined if it goes to Pakistan. Kashmir will lose its independence altogether.

Just now Shaikh Saheb spoke to you of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.⁶ I do not mention his name often but perhaps not a day passes when I do not think

6. * At this time, Ghaffar Khan, who was arrested by the Pakistan Government on 15 June 1948 and sentenced to three years' imprisonment, was being kept in Montgomery jail in West Punjab.

of him and whenever I think of him, it hurts very much that we are supposed to be heading a big Government here and one of the greatest men alive today lies in jail. He has served the country faithfully and I have never met a more honest and true human being in all my life. Among all the great men that India has produced, he is one of the greatest. Such a man has spent a life-time in prison. You cannot imagine a more horrible place than the jails in these border provinces. He and his brother, Khan Saheb and innumerable other colleagues have been in jail ever since Pakistan was created. Even the Government of Pakistan realize that they are getting a bad reputation by keeping them in jail. They may be able to suppress popular feelings by force but there is great resentment and anger, not only in the border areas, but all over the country. Undoubtedly the Pakistan Government fears that if Abdul Ghaffar Khan comes out, the entire map of the Frontier Province will become topsy-turvy. Not that Abdul Ghaffar Khan is going to lead an armed revolt. He is indeed a strange Pathan who has been lovingly called the Frontier Gandhi. He is neither prepared to resort to violence, nor will he permit his colleagues to do so. But there is tremendous strength in him. The Pakistan Government knows that he will not lead an armed revolt. And yet they are so scared of his influence that they cannot release him. I have absolutely no doubt that though Abdul Ghaffar Khan is in jail just now, if the opportunity presents itself, the majority of the people in the Frontier Province will side with him. Anyhow, that is my opinion. But I am giving this as an example of the situation in the Frontier Province. I do not know if you are aware of it. It is a strange situation. If this is the freedom obtaining in the provinces of Pakistan, freedom itself acquires a new meaning. You may perhaps know the condition of the few provinces near the border. I do not have any special information except what I read in the Pakistani newspapers, but there has been brutal suppression and all sorts of atrocities in those areas. I often think of what would have happened to Kashmir if it had been captured by them. Anyhow, when they did manage to capture some parts of Kashmir, you saw what happened and the sort of people who were sent in. I do not know what would have happened to your traditional arts and crafts and skills acquired over a period of thousands of years. What would have been the condition of this State? But in saying this, I am speaking as an individual. The more fundamental thing is that the people of Kashmir did not accept the communal principle or the 'two-nation theory' which Pakistan believes in. Kashmir has never accepted it, even before Pakistan was created. As you know, the National Conference and the Sher-e-Kashmir have reiterated this often. They have not accepted it and rightly so because if it is ever accepted here, Kashmir will not remain as we know it. It will sow the seeds of feud and dissension. Kashmir cannot go on like that, in the midst of fighting and quarrels, and all sorts of changes. Kashmir will certainly be ruined and no one knows how it will affect India and Pakistan. It will certainly have far-reaching effects.

People sitting in Lake Success want to play a game of chess. Perhaps they do not even know where exactly Kashmir is on the map. But they are always ready with suggestions and views. They do not take into consideration all the possible consequences, ie, Kashmir likely to be ruined and the millions in India and Pakistan being affected by such an eventuality. In fact, if a wrong step is taken on the Kashmir issue, India and Pakistan can go up in flames and it could affect the rest of the world. But we have to bear such consequences in mind because we consider these problems in a responsible manner. The way the Security Council has gone about this business is absolutely wrong and we are not prepared to destroy our country just because some ignorant people have taken a wrong decision in the matter.

You might have heard that just a few days ago, suddenly a letter was presented before the Security Council by Mr Zafrullah Khan. In it he had objected to the convening of the Constituent Assembly in Kashmir. A special session of the Security Council was called, without prior notice, to discuss the matter. It is a strange thing that at a slight objection raised by Mr Zafrullah Khan, British and American members of the Security Council should hastily assemble to examine it and may perhaps even be in agreement with him. We have been drawing the attention of the British and American Governments and the Security Council towards the war propaganda being carried on in Pakistan. The layman immediately concludes from all this that great danger threatens and instead of paying attention to that, here we are convening the Constituent Assembly. But the other countries can see no great danger. There has been no meeting of the Security Council to examine the matter. But the moment Zafrullah Khan writes that the Constituent Assembly portends danger, a special session is called.

Anyhow, the decision of the Security Council does not go so far as the delegates of those countries would have wished but it has drawn our attention to the fact that the convening of the Constituent Assembly may have an adverse effect. Anyhow, we replied to them and we shall clarify further when the details are known. But the fact is, as you can see, how the Security Council is swayed by the whims of a few nations.

We made it quite clear that this is not the way to solve the problem. As I said, we cannot accept any arbitration, and neither do we believe in interference of any sort from other countries. We are prepared to meet and discuss the issue with anyone, as we have been taught by Mahatma Gandhi. We will meet any individual who wishes to come and behaves with civility and decorum. But it should be absolutely clear that we have not accepted the proposals made by the Security Council recently and we shall not put them into practice....

In the end, I shall not repeat what I said in the beginning about these decisions, as outsiders mess about with such decisions only when a nation is weak. Our country is undoubtedly not in such a weakened state. The relation

between Kashmir and India has always been close and of long standing. But it has been strengthened further by the blood that has been shed in its cause in the last three and a half years and the difficulties that we have had to face. This bond cannot easily be broken and if we speak softly in the field of politics and the clamour on the side of Pakistan is louder, you must not conclude from that that we attach less importance, now or at any time, to this problem. It is one of our most important problems just now, from every point of view, whether it is considered from the narrow angle of gain or loss to Kashmir and India, or, from the more fundamental point of view of our principles which I have put before you which cannot be abandoned by us whatever be the price or the upheaval. If we abandon them, it will cause a big upheaval in the sub-continent. But if Pakistan attacks, we will face that attack squarely and it is as well for everyone to understand that it has been made quite clear to Pakistan and to other countries that if there is another attack on Kashmir by Pakistan, we will not stop our armed forces once again, as we did once earlier, from crossing the border into Pakistan. Nor will we try to continue to have peaceful trade relations with Pakistan. We will not start a war. But if Pakistan attacks Kashmir again, then we will retaliate in Kashmir and in a thousand other places. It will not be a partial war. It will be total war. So this is not a small matter and every individual, Pakistani and Indian, must understand it and though we may feel anger or passion, we should consider it with calm minds and take decisions and be prepared for all eventualities.

I have taken a lot of your time. I am going back tomorrow morning and will be immediately immersed in a thousand tasks. But please remember that a part of my heart is always in Kashmir.

15. The British Press and the Kashmir Issue¹

I do not think, in the circumstances, that we need take this matter up with the *Daily Express*.² I think, however, that recent writings in the British Press about India, more especially about the Kashmir issue, have been vicious in the extreme. The *Daily Express* has been bad, but the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Economist* and some other newspapers have not been much better. It is not much good

1. Note to Secretary-General, MEA, 6 June 1951. File No 7(2)23-XP(P)/51-MEA.

2. In an editorial the *Daily Express* described Nehru as a criminal.

complaining of these to anybody, but it would be worthwhile drawing the attention of the UK Government to the effect of all these writings on Indo-British relations. It is not necessary to make this a major issue or to make a fuss about it. But to remain quite silent also appears to me to be undesirable. You might write to Haksar³ about this. I do not want Mr Attlee to be approached, but the Commonwealth Relations Secretary⁴ might be informed.

3. P.N. Haksar at this time was Deputy Secretary, External Department, in the Indian High Commission in London.

4. B.N. Chakravarty.

16. Constituent Assembly A Matter of Sovereign Right¹

... Question: Have you anything to say, Sir, about the personal attacks by *Dawn* on you?²

Jawaharlal Nehru: As a matter of fact I am highly flattered by the fact that personal attacks are being made on me not only in the *Dawn* but in the Indian Press, not to mention the American and the UK Press.

Q: But yesterday you expressed doubts about your own abilities and capacity in view of the criticisms that had been appearing in the Indian Press.

JN: It is not inconsistent at all. You must remember that when I speak at a public meeting, although I do not know most of the people present very intimately and give expression to various moods which are perfectly true, it is not a political analysis of the situation. When I say I am flattered I do not mean to say that I approve of what is published.

Q: You said you will welcome Mr Graham but will not cooperate in the implementation of the Security Council resolution. What exactly does it mean?

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 11 June 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 51–57, 247–248, 323–325, 433–434, 446, 450–452, 462–463, 470, 487–488, 525–526.
2. On 8 June 1951, *Dawn* described Nehru as the “brigand who has robbed the Kashmiris of their freedom and placed them under the heels of his troops. Here is the plunderer.”

JN: It is perfectly clear. There is no question of confusion. If Mr Graham or any distinguished person comes here we treat him with courtesy—not a question of welcoming him in a procession or with a brass-band. We just treat him with courtesy and discuss any matter which he wishes to discuss with us and we make it perfectly clear to him that the resolution of the Security Council passed on the last occasion was not accepted by us because of certain features and therefore we are not going to implement it because of those features.

Q: Would courtesy include giving assistance by you to him in touring Kashmir and seeing things for himself?

JN: That is largely a matter for the Kashmir Government. It depends on them. So far as Delhi is concerned anyone can come here and talk to us.

Q: If the proposed Constituent Assembly of Kashmir decides in favour of acceding to India, what will be the position?

JN: We have made it perfectly clear that the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir was not meant and is not meant to decide finally any such question and it is not meant to come in the way of any decision which may ultimately flow from the Security Council proceedings.

Q: There are reports in the Press which say that we are the aggressors in Kashmir and that we decide always just the opposite of what Pakistan decides. Have you anything to say on this?

JN: All I would like to say is this: that so far as this Kashmir issue is concerned it seems to me that either the people who represent India have completely lost the capacity to think and judge or the other people whether in Pakistan or in the UK or the United States have completely lost their capacity to judge anything. It is a fantastic story. The kind of criticism that Pakistan makes is part of the same old story of distortion and misrepresentation. But it is amazing what the British and the US Press has said about this question.³ I am prepared to argue this with anybody and prove that it is fantastic. The attitude adopted by Pakistan in this matter, aided and abetted as it has been by the UK and the USA, is completely distorted and false.

Q: Have you protested to the UK and the USA?

JN: We have pointed out in as gentle a language as possible that the whole thing is fantastic nonsense.

3. See *ante*, pp. 393-394.

Q: Is the Kashmir Constituent Assembly more like a legislative body or an Assembly which will frame a Constitution?

JN: What I want to point out is this: No organisation, no country, has any business to interfere with what is done in Kashmir by India and the Kashmiri people. Because we referred a particular dispute with Pakistan to the United Nations Security Council, that does not give the Security Council authority to interfere with the sovereignty of India or for them to tell us or for any country to tell us what we should do in India or in any part of the Union of India. No interference is going to be tolerated by us. I want to make this perfectly clear because so far as we are concerned we are clear about it—we will tolerate no nonsense about Kashmir, come what may.

Q: In view of what you have said, where does the question of plebiscite stand?

JN: Certainly we are prepared to have a plebiscite on proper conditions and not on improper conditions.

Q: Do you think Pakistan will help you create proper conditions?

JN: I think Pakistan will hinder in every way.

Q: In the ultimate analysis it boils down to this that when the Constituent Assembly gets functioning, your appeal to the United Nations will be out of date?

JN: That is entirely dependent on Pakistan and the attitude of other Powers....

Q: If there is difference of opinion in Kashmir—if a certain section says that Kashmir should be with India and a certain section says that Kashmir should be with Pakistan, what is India going to do?

JN: I do not quite understand your question. Naturally all kinds of difficulties are involved in the consideration of this problem. What is India going to do about what? India, rightly speaking, ought, from every point of view to aim at the pre-trouble condition and then the question can be decided in any way that is right and proper. The pre-trouble condition means the removal of the invading armies, etc., that have come there. There seems to be an extraordinary and rather illogical way of taking for granted that those people who have invaded and committed aggression and occupied our territory have not only a right to be there but to some extent the right to impose themselves upon others even beyond the ceasefire line. It is extraordinary but in order to avoid any kind of military conflict India said quite clearly and definitely that we are not going to have any military operations. Provided the other party also agrees, let us settle

this by other methods—peaceful methods. We certainly are not going to commit the slightest aggression in any military way. It is of course a rather wrong use of the term because it is the aggressor who is occupying some of our territories but we do not wish even to readjust that by any military means. If any trouble occurs, it won't be from our part but from the other part....

17. Cable to A. Soekarno and M. Hatta¹

Please convey following message from Prime Minister to President Soekarno and Dr Hatta: I am grateful to you for your message about Kashmir.² We are very anxious to settle Kashmir problem and we shall be glad to have assistance of Dr Graham in this task. I regret however that Pakistan's attitude of continuous threats of war and denunciation is not helpful towards solution. For our part we have tried our utmost to find peaceful solution in spite of fact that Pakistan committed deliberate aggression and is still in unlawful possession of part of Kashmir State territory. Kashmir is today autonomous State with full internal self-government and it is for Kashmir and the people of Kashmir finally to decide. India's responsibility in law and in fact is for defence and foreign relations.

1. New Delhi, 24 June 1951. JN Collection. The message was sent *via* the Indian embassy in Djakarta.
2. In their telegram of 23 June 1951, Soekarno and Hatta hoped that the Kashmir problem would be solved satisfactorily with the assistance of Dr Graham, and added that it was "a matter of a supreme importance for all our Asian countries that an agreement should be reached early on this long-pending question, and that the relations between India and Pakistan should be established on a basis of sincere friendship."

18. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

New Delhi
June 25, 1951

Nan dear,

... In a recent letter of yours to Bajpai, you mentioned a remark of some official in the State Department. He said to you about America being tough on

1. JN Collection. Extracts.

the Kashmir issue. Well, it is all right for America to be tough on this issue as they have been. Their toughness can only take us away from any possible settlement, as it has done in the past. The UK and USA attitude has encouraged all the bellicose tendencies in Pakistan and, for the first time, I feel that there is real danger of a big-scale conflict between India and Pakistan. That would be most unfortunate. But if it comes, it cannot be helped. We cannot run away from it. It may be our fault that we have not been able to explain our position adequately. The question of Kashmir is not that of a patch of territory. It is a basic question of our entire policy in regard to India. If Pakistan's communal approach and policy prevail in Kashmir, it would not only be a tragedy for Kashmir, but it would upset the whole scheme of things in India, and of course in Pakistan. We would enter a phase of trying to exterminate each other. These are terrible thoughts which come to me, and I find the USA and UK people skating merrily on this very thin ice over the deep ocean, and accusing us of intransigence....

With love from
Jawahar

INTERVIEWS WITH NORMAN COUSINS

Part I¹

Norman Cousins: ...I wonder whether you would care to define for Americans the basis of Indian and American understanding and friendship today.

Jawaharlal Nehru: Well, I don't know that it is possible to define anything precisely in the modern world. The most one can do is to grope about and try to see a way toward any kind of objective that one aims at. Basically, I feel that it is of essential importance for India and the United States to understand and then possibly appreciate each other's outlook with a view to as large a measure of cooperation as possible. Having said that, I begin to think what our objectives are—possibly wider and more ultimate objectives involving a large part of Asia today and possibly the rest of the world. But for the moment I am speaking about India. We are—well, in search of our soul. That sounds rather metaphysical, but I am not, of course, discussing metaphysical matters. We are groping and trying some kind of adjustment—integration, if you like—of our national life, our international as well as individual lives.

Having passed through these periods of transition and very rapid change, we have to find some equilibrium. Well, normally this would have been difficult enough; but in the present state of affairs, after all that occurred since the War in India—the Partition, independence, and so on—all this has shaken us up a good deal. And so we are trying to search to find out what our objectives are. Some of us may have some vague notions; others try to look at things objectively without any fixed ideas so far as possible. So when any—shall I say slogans or fixed concepts—are put, we use them in a measure, but we are rather suspicious, too, because slogans are apt to petrify a man's thinking.

NC: Mr Prime Minister, exactly what slogans and fixed concepts do you have in mind?

JN: Every slogan, every word, almost, that is used by the socialist, the communist, the capitalist. People hardly think nowadays. They throw words at each other. They talk about democracy, but when we sit down and think about democracy all kinds of aspects of it appear which do not necessarily

1. Interviews with Norman Cousins, Editor, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, New York, in New Delhi in March 1951, published in the issues of the journal on 14 and 21 April 1951 and later published as a book entitled *Talks with Nehru* (New York, 1951).

come up in the average man's mind. An Englishman may think of democracy in terms of his system; an American in terms of his system. Russia talks about the people's democracy, which is completely different. They use the same word. People talk about equality. Equality has a certain meaning in people's minds—in Western Europe, in America—a certain meaning which is very largely political. And certainly something aiming at economic equality.

NC: For purposes of this discussion, Mr Prime Minister, how would you define democracy in order to give it a universal meaning—something that people everywhere could understand and respond to?

JN: Now, I told you just now that definitions are very difficult, and I do not presume to define anything, because to define anything that is big is to limit it. Nevertheless, if I may vaguely suggest something, I would say that democracy is not only political, not only economic, but something of the mind, as everything is ultimately something of the mind. It involves equality of opportunity to all people, as far as possible, in the political and economic domain. It involves the freedom of the individual to grow and to make the best of his capacities and ability. It involves a certain tolerance of others and even of others' opinions when they differ from yours. It involves a certain contemplative tendency and a certain inquisitive search for truth—and for, let us say, the right thing. That is, it is a dynamic, not a static thing, and as it changes it may be that its domain will become wider and wider. Ultimately, it is a mental approach applied to our political and economic problems.

NC: In terms of the basic equalities inherent in democracy that you mention, Mr Prime Minister ... would you agree that political equality is the means through which people may achieve the other equalities?...

JN: Yes, Political freedom or political equality is the very basis on which you build up other equalities. At the same time political equality may cease to have meaning if there is gross economic inequality. Where, let us say, people are starving the vote does not count. They are thinking in terms of the next meal and not of the vote. But leaving that out for the moment, political equality is the basis for other equalities.

NC: Would you say, Mr Prime Minister, that it would then also follow that the State must submit itself regularly to the approval of the people? Because unless a people have the chance to pass upon the merits of a certain government political equality will be meaningless.

JN: I agree again. Although I accept that principle completely, in practice the people can be preyed upon so much by propaganda by rousing their passions

in this or that direction that you may get some entirely wrong decisions and wrong policies. But you must take this risk. It is far better to take this risk than the other risk.

NC: I suppose one thing that democracy, as you have defined it, does do is to protect the individual against dangerous error by Government. What other hope is there that, despite the abuses and the confusions, the people can keep decisions in their own hands, which means that the individual must be protected in his right to change the State?

JN: The individual has to be protected. Also the social organism has to be protected against the predatory individual. You take steps against the gangster or the anti-social individual. So the process of protection is twofold. And it is just possible—in fact, not only possible but it has taken place innumerable times—that a group may gain power and may manage for sometime, at least, to preserve that power not merely by the physical means of guns but by deluding the public by propaganda or by other processes.

NC: In which case you might then also say that the people themselves have failed rather than democracy itself. Wouldn't you agree that democracy is actually a chance?

JN: There is an old saying, isn't there, that the people get the government they deserve? And the kind of democracy they deserve? Democracy requires obviously a higher standard among far more people than other forms of government. If they do not reach their standard it may be that their democratic apparatus may fail.

NC: ...The individual, of course, does have obligations and responsibilities to society-at-large, but the State basically is created to advance the welfare of the individual?

JN: Undoubtedly. The individual is uppermost in my mind; but in a social organism an individual cannot be separated from the rest. The rights of the individual must be balanced by the obligations of the individual to the social organism. Without obligations there can be no real rights.

NC: ...Suppose we begin by defining... what the principal obligations of the State are to the individual. After that suppose we go on to the obligations of the individual toward society as a whole.

JN: This business of definitions rather embarrasses me, because I am not a professor or a philosopher or even a very effective politician. I have dabbled

in various things and given a great deal of thought to matters, because they interest me. A State's obligations to the individual or the individual's obligations to the State must necessarily have varied during different periods of history. The original State was a very, very simple State in which, practically speaking, all that the State had to do was to protect the individual from a foreign enemy or another tribe. Then, from that develops the concept of what might be called, without being offensive, a police State. A State preserves law and order, protects its citizens from foreign enemies, and takes taxes to carry on its business. For the rest, it was left to the individual or the group. The present idea of the State has grown far beyond that. A State is supposed to do much more. Every State—I am not talking about any particular brand of State—every State is trying to do ever so much more for the individual than has ever been attempted previously. So the State becomes more and more of a socially functioning organism—for the good of society or the individual, as you like. And the more it becomes that, the more benefits it confers on the individual, the more, in a sense, the individual has obligations to that State. So the two things, the rights and the obligations, march together. If the State and individual are properly integrated and organized there is no conflict. Otherwise, if one side goes ahead of the other there is a lack of balance.

NC: Within that general framework what would you say an individual has the right to expect of a State—not only as a matter of protection against a foreign power but in his direct dealings with the State itself? How would you illustrate the “socially functioning organism” you just mentioned?

JN: The State, apart from protecting the individual from foreign enemies or internal disorders, has the duty to undertake to provide him with opportunities of progress, of education, health, sanitation—generally, everything that would give him the opportunity to fit himself for such work as he is capable of doing. And, you see, the State, as everything else today, has grown more and more centralized. The deep problem of today, to put it in this way, is this: you cannot escape centralized authority, whether it is of the State, whether it is of the big corporation, whether it is of the trade union, or whether it is of any group. They all go on being centralized authorities. Now all centralization is a slight encroachment on the freedom of the individual. We want to preserve the freedom of the individual, and at the same time we cannot escape centralization in modern society. How to balance the two?

NC: ...What is the answer to the conflict between centralization and individual freedom?

JN: Well, I should say that we cannot do without a large measure of centralization. But we should try to limit that as far as possible, keeping the minimum of centralization and as far as possible, decentralize the rest.

NC: Would you at this point, Mr Prime Minister, care to discuss your own program for India today, in the light of these objectives?

JN: I would hardly discuss that program in any detail but the general idea is that we—the State, that is—try to function in a way, first of all, to provide for the primary needs of our people or, at any rate, to make such arrangements that people can get those primary needs. Then there are the important secondary needs. Now, the economic organization would have to be rather a flexible one so that we can vary by experience. It is inevitable that in India, where private resources are not great, any project must be a State project. Our river valley schemes must be State schemes. No one else can do them. And any other really big project can either be a State project or jointly owned by the State and private enterprise with a measure of State control, leaving a large field for private enterprise. Thus we get what I would call a public sector of our economy and a private sector and may be a sector where the two overlap, with part State control and largely a private sector managing under State control. So we have these three branches of our economy. There need not be any rigid lines between them, and we can see which functions better and more successfully and allow them to develop. Our approach is experimental and not dogmatic.

NC: ...What is India doing today to safeguard and enlarge the rights of the people at a time when it is imperative for India to develop projects requiring centralization?

JN: So far as political rights are concerned I suppose that our Constitution has gone as far as any Constitution can go toward safeguarding the political rights of the individual. So far as economic questions are concerned it is a question of a State interfering to protect, rather than keeping away, because in rather undeveloped economies there is a tendency in certain groups of vested interests to override the interests of the large groups by whatever methods they have. Now, we are, very largely speaking, an agricultural, agrarian country. And one of our first programs is land reform; that is, to change the old big landlord system here—rather semi-feudal landlord system—in favour here and there of cooperative farms, which we wish to encourage. That removes one out-of-date system—the big landlord system—which came in the way of our growth. The changeover has been complicated because we have done it by constitutional means and by giving compensation, which is a heavy burden.

Nevertheless, that is clearing the way for other reforms—plans for industrial growth, agricultural growth—in many ways coordinating the two as far as possible and thus bringing about some kind of a balance between industry and agriculture today. There are far too many people on the land. We have to draw some of them into industry—big industry or small industry or both.

NC: ...In connection with India's projected industrial development is there anything that you believe the United States might be able to contribute to India's need today or in the near future?

JN: It is obvious that a highly industrialized and technically efficient nation like the United States can give the greatest help to any underdeveloped country like India. After all, industrialization is limited, as it must be by various factors. There is the factor of the resources we can apply to it, which ultimately means, let us say, annual savings to be put into future growth. It also depends on the technical personnel that we can train. Perhaps that is an even more important factor. And so our progress is bound to be regulated by the resources at our disposal. If we have greater resources—technical, financial, or other—our progress will be faster. That we realize. At the same time, that real progress cannot be superimposed—it has to grow in the country, carrying the people with it. It is not teaching somebody at the top or just putting up a machine. We must grow up to it. While we want to go fast, we want that progress to be solid and not just showy and superficial.

The United States can help us in terms of capital goods and technical personnel. After all, in the nineteenth century a good deal of the development of both North and South America took place with help from Europe. That process to some extent can be applied to Asia now. That type of help can come that will develop Asia and that will enable her to solve her own problems.

NC: ...I have been increasingly disturbed in the past few weeks at what seemed to be a growing misunderstanding between India and the United States. How do you account for this growing misunderstanding, which in many instances seems actually to approach hostility?

JN: You have been here now some weeks or months. There are many Americans who have visited India during the last few months and have met all kinds of people—members of Government, our officials, our people in the fields and factories, peasants, and the rest. I should like to think of your own experiences here. Have you in your individual capacity experienced—shall I say—any hostility toward you yourself or toward Americans as individuals?

NC: ... I would say, based upon my experience, Mr Prime Minister, that while I have nothing but the warmest feeling for the Indian people, who

have offered their hand in friendship wherever I have gone, I am, as an American, disturbed at what I have read in the Press and what I have heard about America and the American people as a whole.

JN: I asked you that rather personal question because I wanted you to appreciate a certain difference between what might be called personal reactions and reactions in regard to some vague impersonal policy.

NC: Yes.

JN: Now, look at our history vis-a-vis England. For one hundred fifty years or more there was a great deal of hostility, as was natural, against the British occupation of India. To some extent that was transferred to the Englishmen or the English officers here, too. But—not too much. Now, after this change in India to independence, you have no doubt found that there is very little hostility—practically none—to England and certainly none to any individual Englishman.

NC: ...Is it wrong to say that America may have replaced Great Britain as a villain in the eyes of some Indians, at least? Is that a fair statement?

JN: Well, I don't think so. Not in that sense, because the Englishman came in contact as an officer with the masses of our people. The Americans don't. America is something distant about which our newspaper readers may read and talk. It does not sink to the level of the large masses. But what I was pointing out was this: that one must take note of what might be called the basic feeling of difference in outlook or policy, which for the moment may be expressed strongly but which does not represent any basic hostility. So far as India is concerned I do not think we are very good at long continued or sustained hostility.

Apart from that, for at least thirty years or more we have been conditioned by Mahatma Gandhi. He was continuously telling us that we were fighting against British imperialism, but that we must treat the Englishman as our brother. Well, we did not learn this lesson very well, perhaps, but it did affect our minds and ways of thinking. Anyway, the whole point is this—that I do not think there is any basic hostility against America or, for that matter, against any country here in India. Certain things, certain policies, which may not be clear or which may not fit into our policy, may create criticism—which is a completely different thing.

Now our policy, I should like you to remember, our present general world policy is the natural outgrowth of all our thinking during the last thirty years or more. If you took the trouble to read the resolutions our National Congress

passed—twenty-five years ago, thirty years ago—you would find a certain way of thinking which we repeated again and again. So that it was quite natural for us to carry that on—varying it, of course, adapting it to changing conditions in the world. Then came our independence. Again, the reaction of a newly independent country is not to get entangled; to keep going itself; to protect its own interest in terms of its larger friendship in the world. So that we had all this background. Not that we are ignorant of world conditions; we are friendly observers of them. Then again, there is this aspect of it: if you dislike a thing or disapprove of it, how are you to meet that particular contingency now? We have felt all along that the right approach must be as far as possible an approach of friendliness even to the other wrong approach. Not appeasement. We make a distinction between the two. One must not appease evil, but we have to convert evil as far as possible. Therefore we have to be firm and yet courteous and friendly. The evildoer may not be converted, but remember there are vast numbers of people who are not evil but are conditioned by the evildoer.

NC: ...We cannot advance common security for the world's peoples through a policy of appeasement. Would you agree?

JN: I agree with you entirely when you say that there should be no appeasement of evil. Having said that, it depends how you deal with evil. It depends also what is evil and what is not and to what degree a thing is evil. Very few things are 100 per cent evil—just as very few things are 100 per cent good—and if condemning something that is mixed good and evil you condemn the whole thing you might get slightly entangled in condemning the good, too.

NC: But what happens when you are threatened by the whole thing?

JN: Well, when you are threatened by the whole thing you resist that threat, but you try to distinguish, nevertheless, because otherwise you confuse people's minds and make them think that you are against the good, too.

NC: ...I don't think there is any hostility in the United States towards the Russian people. We regard the Russian people as human beings who are entitled to the same fair share of the good things of life as we want for ourselves. But some peoples in the world today are harnessed by their Governments to purposes which threaten peace. Under these circumstances would you agree that even if we do make distinctions the threat to world peace can continue? How are we to deal with this threat—again without uncertainty or appeasement?

JN: Well, that is a big question that you have raised. I should have said that the basic threat today in the world was fear. And fear is the most dangerous companion for any individual or for any country to possess. Fear clogs the mind, and leads often to impassioned action. As you have said, we must not give in to evil, but we must also remember that evil is not surmounted by wrong methods which themselves produce more evil. Therefore, the method becomes very important. It may sound—well, shall I say—like preaching a sermon. I have felt more and more that the basic lesson that Gandhiji taught was right, and that was that means should never be subordinated to ends. I know that these sayings cannot easily be translated into life. A politician or statesman cannot function like a prophet, whether it is in a democracy or any other type of government. He has to limit himself to people's understanding of him and people's appreciation of what he says, otherwise he cannot function at all. Nevertheless, this basic idea seems to be most important; that the right means should be employed and firmness should be allied always to a spirit of friendliness and conciliation, not of appeasement. I do make a distinction.

NC: What, then, is a policy that could represent firmness without appeasement? What can we do to keep from spreading in the world that very doctrine—that the end justifies the means?

JN: Well, negatively speaking, the first thing to do is to follow means which can be justified. And not to adopt the same argument that in order to meet evil one can adopt any means to meet that evil. Then one stands on a stronger moral foundation and can meet that evil much more effectively. For the rest, it is a question of balance all the time—that in the context of things one at least does not do the wrong thing. Then, again, one thing is always possible—it is that one can be firm, shall I say, courteous, when need for firmness is not shown by violent language, which really, especially when countries are dealing with each other, inflames popular passions so much that it becomes impossible to think calmly and dispassionately. Violent language inflames the minds of others—not only of the evil people but even of the good people, even of the good people on the other side. There is a wall created which absolutely prohibits understanding.

NC: As you observe the development of the United Nations, Mr Prime Minister, do you believe that it does offer the means of creating an atmosphere of reason and checking the spread of such doctrines in the world ...that the end justifies the means? ...How we can check and combat aggressive totalitarianism, isn't this the primary job of the United Nations?

JN: The United Nations was formed with an objective defined in its Charter. Its structure was both defined and proclaimed by its founders. It is essentially an instrument for peace. If that structure is changed and if it becomes an instrument for war then it does not function as the United Nations but as something else which may really not be necessary; but it is a different functioning and a different structure. The whole idea of the United Nations, in the minds of President Roosevelt and others, was that people in countries of different ways should come together around the table, that, in fact, every country in the world should come there and hammer out solutions instead of fighting on the battlefields. Now, if that structure is changed and a good part of the world is not there, then a very different situation is created; that other part of the world doesn't participate in that hammering-out and it has to be dealt with by other means. The United Nations at the present moment is the only organization which can deal with such problems. But it does seem that its effectiveness is growing less. Its basic, I should say its spiritual, effectiveness is growing less because it is working in a field which is rather foreign to its conception.

NC: ...In such a United Nations, built up on clearly defined rights and obligations, might we not have the basis for the universal design you seek?

JN: Doesn't that mean a change in the basic conception and structure of the United Nations, leading up to a United Nations that represents, by and large, countries of one way of thinking?

NC: ...I suppose the big question for such a strengthened United Nations is not which nations are to be left out but how to get all the nations in the world to come in.

JN: Surely the United Nations cannot claim two things at the same time. One is to ignore a country within its counsels and at the same time try to impose its will on that country which has been ignored. The two are contradictory. The United Nations by keeping out some countries, whether China or Ceylon (both, I think, are equally wrong), in a sense denies itself the moral right to deal with that country. For that country it is a simple reply that "you do not recognize us for this purpose; therefore we have nothing to do with you." The United Nations thereby puts itself in a wrong position. If you cannot deal with a country within the form of the United Nations, then the only alternative is to deal with it outside ultimately by force of arms.

When you talk about blocs, it is rather difficult to define what a bloc is. Any military alliance is a very close bloc.² Any two or three or four countries joining together is a bloc—whether for military or other reasons. So either on the one side you must put an end to any association of two countries for any purpose—other than may be cultural—or some kind of alliances will take place ultimately. Such things have to be met by an improvement of the world situation, because much of this is due to fear—whether fear of oppression, fear of other countries spreading out and attacking the interests and privileges of their neighbours. The basic way to move is to create conditions of lessened fear. Having done that, you can then build up that type of United Nations you have suggested.

NC: ...Would you agree that the place to start is by eliminating today the cause of fear? What better way to do that than by working inside the United Nations itself to give it the required strength within the required time? What other hope for the world is there?

JN: That is true. But, again, I repeat that if the United Nations itself in the minds of large numbers of people does not represent the world as a whole it becomes a part of the world and the other part is out of it. That part of it then is not subject to its jurisdiction, and you can only bring it in or deal with it by the policemen's methods—which countries resent. So that instead of assuring peace you are gradually drifting to greater conflicts.

NC: ...Assuming that weakness tends to create crisis, how can such weakness as may now exist in the United Nations be eliminated?

JN: You are referring to a possible revision of the United Nations Charter?

NC: Yes Sir.

JN: Well, perhaps that may be desirable and it may help. Personally, I do not find anything wrong about the United Nations Charter itself. There may be minor procedural matters. It is a very fine Charter. The objectives are fine, but still, if a revision is required, certainly we should consider it to make the United Nations more of a universal body. That would no doubt help.

2. Norman Cousins had stated that so long as there were no compulsory and binding obligations which could make it possible for the United Nations to implement and force its decisions, there was every tendency for nations which felt insecure, to strengthen themselves through armament programmes or military alliances. This in turn made it difficult for one bloc to see the other bloc attempting to build up its position.

Part II

Norman Cousins: ...Would you care to give your ideas as to what went wrong after San Francisco?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Well, that reaches rather fundamental and far-reaching issues. Something happened, let us say, when the First World War began, which put an end to one phase of human existence and started another. World War I was fought for democracy and to put an end to aggression. It resulted in a complete victory; and yet, we know that between the two Wars the climate was one of great conflict and upsets, economic and social. Something new had come into the picture. The old world had ended and a new world was groping its way, trying to find a new equilibrium. Then came the Second World War. That, too, ended in a tremendous victory, and soon we found ourselves in all kinds of conflicts and troubles.

Now, this leads one to think that there may be something wrong—either in our objectives or in the methods we adopted to gain them. We got the victory, all right. Why did something escape us, elude us, so that once again we find ourselves in trouble? That is a basic question which I think deserves a great deal of thought.

The natural consequence of that line of thought is that wars, ending that way, do not solve any question or, if they attempt to solve one question, they lead to other problems that are even greater. In other words, victory was only the removal of an obstruction which had come in one's way.

I also think that it might be said at this time that the course of development of the world and the industrial revolution had gradually come to a stage when World War I began, when there were numerous conflicts between Germany and England and other countries. They were resolved only partially, and so the conflicts continued. Now another thing is happening today. Asia comes into the picture. Asia begins to be industrialized, and some kind of conflict again takes place on a new plane.

We have to think all these things out and not imagine that there is some superficial way of dealing with them in talking about maintaining peace. We have to understand the basic causes of conflict. It seems to me that unless we do that we shall repeatedly get further away from our objective because we really have not clearly thought out the real difficulties and laid down the way of approach to their solution.

NC: ...Didn't the League of Nations fail precisely because individual nations insisted on placing their sovereignty above the common needs of the organization of which they were a part?

JN: The League of Nations, formed after the First World War, was the natural outcome of a desire that had long been felt for international cooperation. It failed for a variety of reasons—chiefly because, I suppose, people and nations and governments were not wholly trained up to that idea. The United Nations came into being after that rather unfortunate experience of the League of Nations. They tried to build it on solid foundations. The United States came into the picture, which made a very great difference for good. I have no doubt that in the long run the world must go on toward some form of what is called rather vaguely “one world”.

NC: What kind of “one world”?

JN: What form it will take I cannot say—probably fairly close cooperation between autonomous nations for the preservation of world order, something even more than the United Nations represents today. Anyhow we cannot have it suddenly or by decree. One has to grow up to it. The United Nations—or rather the idea behind the United Nations—was a very big step toward that, and that idea is worth preserving and working for. But the United Nations, first of all, can only function if it keeps that idea continually before it. It cannot function if that main idea slips away and the United Nations becomes something different from what it was intended to be. Obviously, one of the essential features of a world Government through the United Nations must be the prevention of aggression by one country over another, one people over another. It should also be the promotion actively and positively of better relations between countries, cooperation in various branches of activity.

Now the world as we find it today is unbelievably varied, and various parts face different problems. In Asia the primary problem is, let us say, food or raising terribly low living standards. The people lack the necessities of life. They think primarily in those terms. They have just come out of the colonial stage and they have a certain vitality. They have a certain resistance to any attempt to reimpose that colonialism, and, while they may not be strong enough positively, they are strong enough to resist any imposition of any form of foreign domination. One cannot think in terms of imposing anything on Asia today against the will of the people. No solution that is not accepted by large masses of people can have any possible enduring quality.

NC: In that connection is it not possible, Mr Prime Minister, that the spread of communism may actually result in another form of foreign domination?...

JN: Undoubtedly. If, as has often happened recently, communism comes not only as an economic doctrine but rather as an extension of imperialism, then

for a moment it might appeal to people because it comes as something that appears to them to be a liberating force. But there is bound to be resistance to it, which resistance will grow. The difficulty today in Asia is that the country or the group or the idea that represents any kind of liberating force appeals to the people. That liberating force when applied to the political domain might be called nationalism. It may be applied to the economic domain when it deals with, let us say, land problems or others that appeal to people. And so the right appeal to the people should be connected with their idea of liberation—either political or economic.

NC: How, then, do we go about checking the spread of communism on those two levels on which it is presently operating? First, the nationalist level, on which Russia apparently is attempting to carry out a design which was fashioned long before the Communist leaders came to power.... that goes back to 1896, 1900 and 1904....that Russia, today is using its ideology as the means of advancing expansionist aims that go far beyond any ideology?

JN: You mentioned Russia's activities long ago in the nineties, etc. They were purely imperialistic. There was no ideology behind them except the expansion of a powerful country. And other countries that are dominated by Russia reacted more or less in the ways that colonial countries react. Then came the Communist phase of Russia, which apparently broke away from the imperialist tradition and spoke to many countries in Asia on anti-imperialist lines and appeared to be a kind of liberating force. It appealed to them a quarter of a century ago. They did not know much about it, but this appealed to them; and there is no doubt that the measure of sympathy—a large measure of sympathy—that Russia a quarter of a century ago obtained in Asia was because of that. That is, it allied itself to the nationalism of various peoples.

In recent years there has been a very marked difference in approach, and the communist tendency has come into conflict with the nationalist tendency in many countries—India, Indonesia, Burma, and some other countries. Where this has happened thus far the nationalist tendency has proved the stronger—provided always that the nationalist tendency does not support reactionary social tendencies, because reactionary social tendencies come in the way of the economic change that is so urgently desired—more especially in regard to land but in other matters too.

NC: In connection with your statement that whenever the communist tendency comes into conflict with the nationalist tendency, the nationalist tendency triumphs, would you care to enlarge on this as it concerns India?

JN: Yes, communism in India right up to the beginning of the Second World War had very little importance except as a vague idea that appealed to some people in support of the national movement. Therefore it was a very small fringe of the national movement that did not count for much otherwise. It did count for a little among the industrial workers then. But in the large scheme of things it was not important. It was really in the later days of the War that communism became more important, partly because of the opportunities given to it in wartime to build itself up, because it was supporting the War. (That is, after the Soviet Union came into it.) It built itself up at the cost of breaking away from nationalism. It did gain something in organization, but it lost a good deal in its break with the nationalist movement and therefore in the hostility it aroused among the members of the nationalist movement.

Today in India communism is definitely opposed to nationalism. It can create, it can give a lot of trouble in local areas—either industrial or agricultural areas but even that is very limited. Now the question is: how far can the nationalist movement go forward in solving some of the urgent economic problems? If it fails, naturally that is an encouragement to communist ideas. If it succeeds, then communism or communist ideas in India shrink.

NC: You are confident, then, Mr Prime Minister, that the national development of India will move at a pace that will make it possible for this country to resist communism and, indeed, to set up the antibodies within it, over the long range, which can protect it against communism?

JN: When you talk about communism you must distinguish between certain ideological, economic bases of communism that we vaguely call socialism in its various aspects and the particular tactics employed by the Communist Party, say, in India. By mixing the two together a certain confusion is created in the mind because there are certain things about socialism rather than communism which attract large numbers of people in India. But there is very great resentment and opposition to the tactics of the Communists in India, who really have become purely terroristic and who challenge not only the Government but most things in India. Therefore, I think that unless any Government in India completely fails to satisfy the economic urges and wants of the people communism will not gain very much hold here.

NC: ...How do you interpret the invasion of Tibet? Would you say that this constitutes a direct threat to India, apart from whatever ideological progress or lack of progress the Communists may make on the home front?

JN: No. I am not afraid of any external threat to India of that kind. And I certainly am not afraid of any threat from the Tibetan side, for a variety of reasons, which I need not go into now. Even practical military reasons are against it. But the real reason and the basic reason is that I do not think that India and China are going to function in that way toward each other.

NC: Do you think it possible that China... might be persuaded that her interests lie more in the direction of fulfilment of Russia's ideological and national aims than in the direction of the type of united Asia you described?

JN: I do not think so. China thinks for itself. China is closely allied to Russia in many ways but in the final analysis it decides for itself what it has to do and what it has not to do. I do not see how it can possibly profit China or even, for that matter, Soviet Russia to think in terms of taking India. In the present state of affairs there can either be a continuation of peace or there might be war. If there is war on a world scale then the chief theatre of war which will make a difference to the final outcome of the war will be situated elsewhere, not in India. It may be situated in Europe. That is the most important theatre. India does not come into the picture at all as an important theatre, and it is perhaps imperiling the final result of the war to indulge in such adventurous schemes.

NC: Well, if the showdown comes—if the war does come—what role do you think India would play in such a war?

JN: India for the present is trying her utmost to prevent such a showdown—not because India thinks she can make very much difference to the world's destiny but because she is absolutely convinced that a war on the scale that is imagined now will mean a total destruction of every idea and objective that civilization stands for. In fact, the very things one might fight against, while defeated in battle, may triumph because of the general ruin that may come to the world. Therefore, it becomes of essential importance to prevent that war and get a period of peace which might permit us to establish some kind of world equilibrium.

I am quite convinced that people in every country, wherever they may be, generally desire peace. Now if war comes, it is a little difficult to imagine what its cost may be, but one thing is clear—it will mean large-scale destruction and it may be a very lengthy war. And no one knows what the final result will be, not in terms of victory or peace but rather in what state the world will be in afterwards. It is the most dangerous thing from that point of view to look forward to. Now India will try to do her best to keep that war from

spreading, just as she has tried to the extent of her capacity to limit the Korean war. If a large area of the world can keep out of the war it may be able to help in bringing about peace a little sooner than otherwise.

NC: Yes, there can be no doubt, as you say, that the world's peoples want peace. But do all the world's rulers want peace? And do we have today in the world the means by which aggression, for example, may actually be prevented? Are not these two factors largely responsible for the fear of which you spoke earlier?

JN: May I just tell you the background in which I have been trained? When Gandhi came on the scene in India his message to us all was: "Do not be afraid of British imperialism." They had all the armies, all the apparatus of the State, all the resources at their command. We had nothing except our bare hands and, if you like, a certain spirit. It was odd, his telling us "do not be afraid" and telling that not to people like me but to the poor, downtrodden peasant in the field who had always been kicked about by everybody. And yet, strangely enough, something of his message caught, and we did shed our fear and we found a great release.

Ultimately, as you know, it was very largely through Gandhi's tactics and methods that we obtained our independence. Now, one may not apply that exact parallel to the world's state, for conditions are different. But I think basically there is a great deal in it that can be applied.

Today fear is almost all-pervasive. The strongest countries are afraid—not afraid of any one country—but afraid of the consequences of what might happen. And I think if we could possibly lessen this great tension and strain, that by itself would be a great gain and give us some chance, some opportunity of working more constructively for peace.

So I would suggest that the first step should be this attempt to lessen the strain and tension in people's minds and the minds of Governments. I cannot suggest a definite thing to be done in regard to that, because it depends on circumstances and on steps to be taken to fit in with those circumstances. But if that is the objective, then let us lessen this fear and tension. I think it can be done and I am quite sure that the reaction of the peoples would be tremendous. Then the next step would immediately become a little easier. That is why we were anxious that this Korea affair should be settled, if possible, quickly, because for the moment that seemed to be the one thing most likely to lead to wider hostilities, ultimately even on a world scale.

NC: In connection with Korea, now that the United Nations military position seems to have stabilized itself and we have been able to recover our balance, do you believe that the ability of the UN today to achieve

peace in Korea is stronger than it was last December, when our forces were pushed back toward the sea?

JN: From that point of view it is better; that is, the ability is better. But the basic fact is that a solution of the Korean problem or any problem in the Far East must have the concurrence of the various countries geographically involved. Any other solution, say one based on military force, is no solution because one has to carry on with the military problem and get rid of it.

NC: What proposal do you believe the US today should make as the basis for settlement in Korea?

JN: I am not going to suggest anything specific. In the past we have made various suggestions, some of which bore some fruit and some of which did not. It really depends on the exact situation. But the point is that people have to talk about it. Obviously the United Nations, the United States, the United Kingdom, and so on are very much concerned in Korea. But we have no desire to barge in anywhere. If we can be helpful we are prepared to help. Otherwise we will gladly remain outside.

NC: ...What would you say is the basis of peace with justice in Korea today, a peace that the American people could regard as fair, as honourable?

JN: May I say that I entirely agree with you that any peace which depends on the shattering of moral values is not worth having? Ultimately that is not a peace at all. That is just a gradual degradation of the human being or society in the world. In fact, one of the most painful things that we have seen in the last thirty or forty years, partly owing to the big wars that have taken place, is this degradation of moral values of the world. After all, the greatest force in favor of degradation is war. Human beings function in wartime as they never function in peacetime. So from that point of view, also, war is a hateful thing; and if we are to preserve any kind of moral values in the world we have to avoid war.

Now, you talked about Korea. It seems to me obvious that the only solution in Korea would ultimately depend on the Korean people. Any solution that is imposed upon them by anybody, whether it is China or whether it is the UN, if it goes against the wishes of the Korean people will not be abiding. There will be trouble there continuously. That trouble will be utilized by other forces and can go on. Therefore we have to find a way to allow the Korean people to function as they want to function themselves.

NC: But before that could take place—self-determination in Korea—would it not be necessary to have a ceasefire?

JN: I can hardly go into details, but I can heartily agree that a ceasefire is essential. Ceasefire plus a talk around a table by those concerned. The basis of that talk ought to be the self-determination of the Korean people; if you take these three factors together the rest may follow, if people are reasonable—and I imagine that in those circumstances there will be an element of reason and reality about these talks.

NC: Do you believe that China today or in the near future may wish to discuss the nature of and the basis of a ceasefire order?

JN: I cannot say what China today may do, but only a little while ago, only a month or so ago, China agreed first to a temporary ceasefire and then to a discussion leading to a permanent ceasefire.

NC: Do you believe that it might be fruitful, perhaps, if the UN today were to reopen the entire question and put it before China?

JN: Yes, but you will remember that the UN having rejected the present Government of China, finds it a little difficult to deal with someone it has rejected. The answer is: "If you won't have us, won't recognize us normally, how do you deal with us in other ways?" But that is a minor matter. The point is that the leading Powers in the UN can settle it, can make that approach.

NC: ...Do you feel that Southeast Asia may perhaps be confronted with a similar threat to what happened in Korea?

JN: In Southeast Asia today the only area of some kind of conflict is in Indo-China. The other areas at most may be said to be areas of potential conflict. I am quite sure that if the war in Korea ends or even if it is limited there will be no aggression in Southeast Asia. Of course, if the war spreads then anything might happen. Therefore, if we can limit the Korean war and, better still, if we can end it then I see no present danger of any new development taking place in any part of Southeast Asia.

NC: ...The point has been made in the US that India today is not really neutral but is actually inclined toward Russia and China. Would you care to comment on that?

JN: The word neutrality, of course, is not a correct word to describe our policy. Normally neutrality can only be used as opposed to belligerents in time of war. In time of peace the question does not arise—unless one is always thinking in terms of war. Our policy is simply this: we wish to judge every issue on its merits and the circumstances then prevailing, then decide

what we consider best in terms of world peace or our other objectives. Repeatedly we have in the UN or elsewhere voted or encouraged a certain policy which was liked by some nations, disliked by others, and *vice versa*. We do not understand or, rather, we do understand but we do not wish to adopt a policy or be against a country merely for the sake of being against that country. That is not judging the merits of a particular question, but rather largely on the basis of being against a particular country or group of countries. So far as China is concerned, China is developing along entirely different lines from us. We have no desire to interfere with China and don't want China to interfere with us. I believe China's people and India's people, quite apart from recent developments, have had for a long period of time very friendly feelings toward each other. I think, despite changes, we want that to continue and we do not want to take any steps to raise hostilities between these two countries, which have a tremendous frontier and which had at least 2,000 years or more of relations with each other.

NC: Do you make a distinction between the Chinese people and the Chinese Government?

JN: Not in that way, because I believe that at the present moment the Chinese Government is very representative of the large majority of the Chinese people. I can't say about all. But what I said was that basically the Chinese people have been influenced by friendly feelings toward India. What the Chinese Government's policy may be is a different matter—or how it may develop—but I do not see any reason why it should develop in a hostile manner toward India.

NC: How would it be possible, Mr Prime Minister, to determine over the course of the next few years whether the Chinese Government does have the backing of the Chinese people?

JN: You talk about the next few years. I don't know about the next few years, but I should have thought that the last few years proved conclusively that the present Chinese Government came into power with the largest possible backing of the Chinese people. At the present moment that more or less continues. In fact, they came into power with the greatest ease and only because they had that large backing. Otherwise it would have been almost impossible for them to do it.

NC: Do you believe that China with whatever momentum it may have as the result of its revolution may be turning its eyes toward Southeast Asia?

JN: I should imagine that at the present moment what China desires above everything else is peace to solve its terrible problems and consolidate itself.

Therefore, it cannot possibly think in terms of extension toward Southeast Asia or any other direction. That is on the pure ground of expediency, if you like. They are tied up with their own problems. Therefore, I do not see that happening. Now, of course, in the long perspective of history it is difficult to say what might happen in the future—what a powerful nation may do to develop expansionist tendencies. We have had a rather interesting history in Southeast Asia for the last 2,000 years. During this long period the two great countries of China and India were each impinging upon the other in Southeast Asia. We didn't have any war. We have one or two very petty conflicts, but the fact is this contact of overlapping in Southeast Asia was continuous for at least a thousand years.

NC: ...Would China attempt to keep her country united by some adventure beyond her border?

JN: These are hypothetical questions. It is possible that this might be so. Well, how are we going to meet that situation?

NC: I wonder whether you might wish to outline your own position in the event that China because of internal pressures or because of any other reason might go in for a dynamic or aggressive foreign program.

JN: May I go back and remind you of a past phase of history? After the Soviet Revolution in Russia the Soviet Union had tremendous problems and difficulties. It was amazing that it survived. Now, I think that a very wrong step was taken then by trying to suppress the Soviet Union, cut it off, isolate it, and have a so-called *cordon sanitaire* around it. That failed, but it resulted in one thing; it turned the Soviet Union into a bitter opponent of Western countries; and the memory of that isolation survives in Russia. It will be a very dangerous thing to repeat that experiment in China, more dangerous even than it was then because conditions are different. If we force China into a kind of isolation, cut it off from the great part of the world, the consequence of that to the rest of the world will not be good. China will suffer, of course, but the world is so constituted that the rest of the world would suffer as well.

Now to answer your question. So far as India is concerned I have not a shadow of a doubt that any kind of aggression against India will be met by resistance. India will not tolerate it. I do not expect it, but I've made it perfectly clear that we will not tolerate any aggression.

NC: Will you be ready for it if it comes?

JN: Absolutely, at any time, from any direction.

NC: ...What are the people of Czechoslovakia, for example, to think about Russia? I suppose that few nations did more to make Soviet Russia feel acceptable than Czechoslovakia. How would you react to that statement?

JN: Well, I do not react well at all to that statement. I am greatly distressed at many things that have happened in Eastern Europe since the last War, most especially in Czechoslovakia. I do not wish to go into details but I do feel that this kind of development is bad for any particular country. But what troubles me more is that it is bad in the larger sense of the word, too. You see, as we are constituted today no government and no people can do without, let us say, armed force for defence, for protection, for security, and the rest of it. Nevertheless, I do believe fundamentally that armed force does not solve any problems. It is the spirit of man that triumphs—even over death.

I was in Czechoslovakia in 1938 at the time of the Sudeten crisis, and all my sympathies were with the Czech people. It was a great sorrow to me to see these brave, disciplined, democratic people thrown overboard at that time and falling into Hitler's hands; and it is a sorrow to me today, for these people today are still facing grave difficulties. Now I have no solution for these things, because there is no magic solution. One has to go deeper down and find the root causes. It is patent today that some of the great countries of the world are so full of fear of what might happen, of aggression, etc, that they prepare for it, with the result that others prepare for it, and so the preparation for war mounts up. Possibly even some of the aggression itself is caused rather by that fear that the other party might become dominant in that area. This does not lead to any peaceful solution; it merely leads you to the precipice of war where the slightest push might send you over.

NC: Coming back to Czechoslovakia: in 1945 and 1946 would you not agree that the world then was relatively free of fear? What steps do you think might have been taken at that time that might have been able to avert the overthrow of Czechoslovakia?

JN: I am afraid I cannot say and I would not say. It is too difficult a question, because since the last War so many things have happened, with one leading into another. The only basic step would have been to divert the world's attention toward less fear of aggression and less fear of prospective war and, of course, toward a continuous attempt to deal with these questions in the United Nations or in other powerful ways.

NC: Would you agree, Mr Prime Minister, in connection with your last statement, that the world's last best hope of peace, then, is the United Nations—to revert to an earlier point in our discussion?

JN: When you talk about the United Nations a number of pictures come into my mind. One is the great ideal that inspired, that gave birth to the United Nations. Another is the Charter of the United Nations. Another is the structure of the United Nations, and so on. I do think that all these things are fundamentally not only worthwhile but essential. But that does not mean that I approve of everything that the United Nations does simply because it is the United Nations. That does not mean that the way the United Nations has sometimes functioned is always very desirable. In fact, it does not mean even that the present structure of the United Nations is ideal or is in line with what it was intended to be. So that if you want the United Nations really to be great—not only powerful in the material sense but a power affecting the minds and spirits of men—then it must function in a particular way to capture the minds and spirits of men. Now if the United Nations does not affect half of the world, well, it is not the United Nations and it cannot think of controlling a quarter of the world or half the world by military means.

Even if it succeeded in doing so the result would not be the democratic ideal but some military dictatorship all over the world. And yet, it is quite inevitable that something in the nature of the United Nations has to take charge of the world in the wider sense, not of compulsion so much. Compulsion can ultimately only be exercised over a small evildoer if society believes in a certain fundamental moral principle. If that principle itself is challenged by a great part of society then there is conflict. Ultimately the United Nations must not only be, of course, universal but must, shall I say, deprive to a certain degree other nations of some phases of their sovereignty. That is to say, it will have to develop the international order into an international government, in the largest sense of the term and without interfering with national autonomy.

The world today is a curious mixture of some degree of uniformity and a great variety—a great variety in the sense that there are differing historical backgrounds, cultural methods, ways of living, economic conditions. Some countries are very backward, some are underdeveloped, some are highly developed. Then there is this difference of cultural background. We do come nearer to each other because of rapid communications and transport, etc. But basic things such as racial backgrounds remain. How are we to deal with this variety? It is no good trying to make them uniform and regimented, and I do not think it would be a good thing to try to do this.

So it comes to this: giving as much freedom as possible for each way of life to develop along its own lines, helping it where possible without too much interference, understanding its ways and, of course, neither interfering with it nor allowing it to interfere with others. That is, in the world as it is we have to adopt the principle of live and let live but always with an ever-growing cooperation which gradually integrates the world more and more closely together. Any attempted forcible integration leads, can only lead, to

some kind of military rule which would be bad from many points of view and most especially from the point of view of the development of the individual or the group. So one has to balance these factors all the time; one has to have more and more cooperation developing into a world order and at the same time more and more autonomy in respective regions for the people in those regions to function as they like.

NC: ...Would India join other nations in proposing a re-examination of the United Nations with a view towards strengthening it?...

JN: I hope that I have some sense of moral value and standards. In fact, if I may say so, I do not think that life is worthwhile without some such standards—moral or spiritual in the widest sense. But I am terribly afraid of people who talk about morality or about crusading. The whole conception in India was built up, if you look at Indian history, on the principle of non-proselytization. Our religion is so based. We do not go out of our way to ask anybody to change his religion and belong to ours. He can believe in his own religion and in his own standards. If anything in us appeals to him, good, he can discuss it with us. It is a question for the individual to decide. Why should I impose my view of religion or spirituality or anything else on the other person or on the other nation, except insofar as out of discussion, consultation, cooperation we adopt each other's ways?

Therefore, my whole approach is somewhat different and not of this moral crusade, because it is not quite so easy to find out what is the right morality on a certain occasion. Oh yes, we use high words—high-sounding phrases and words—but behind those phrases may lie entirely different chains of thought, objectives, interests, and the like. Everybody talks in high terms now, especially in a democracy when we go to the electors; but the fact remains that the person who talks like that may not necessarily act in that way. Therefore I would personally prefer not so much talk about—well, shall I say high morality and the rest of it—and tackle the problem in a simpler way. May I mention another thing? More and more I am beginning to dislike slogans. Slogans, of course, came into the picture very much from Russia. The Communist lives on slogans. Some of the slogans are not bad, but I dislike most slogans. They prevent the person from thinking. All slogans, I think, are rather confusing, although they may contain an element of the truth in them. So let us face this problem, certainly in a moral way, in a spiritual way, and, if I may say so, in a reverent way and, if I may also say so, with always the idea at the back of my mind that I may not be wholly right. There may be something else that might help me. There may be something else that has escaped me. If we approach it in that spirit, and then think of world cooperation, of building up a universal order—if possible through the UN, through the UN growing,

becoming more universal, having more power to suppress any crime against humanity—we may do that; but we will do that only when in a large measure the organization itself begins to represent what might be called the will of the world community.

NC: ... Some of the newspapers here in India ...have suggested that if the United States sent India wheat it would do so for purely selfish motives. ...some American newspapers have said that you yourself were not really anxious to have this gift from the United States. Would you care to comment on this?

JN: You have been here for two months or more. No doubt you have read many of our newspapers and no doubt you have seen that a good number of them criticize our Government pretty vigorously—sometimes, well, even worse. I hope that you have realized that we have some kind of freedom of the Press here and, secondly, that some of the newspapers are very good and that some of them are not so good. But to answer your question: I just do not understand any individual or newspaper saying that. We have always wanted not only the general cooperation of America but particular cooperation or assistance for the things we need.

A year and a half ago when I went to the United States, even then food was our basic need, and I mentioned it. And I have often been surprised to hear people say, sometimes Americans, that they gathered the impression that I did not want help. It amazes me. Of course, we want all the help in the world from everybody in the world. But it is also true that—and this is what Mahatma Gandhi always told us—we must learn to stand on our own feet. Too much reliance on outside help means that you do not grow up properly, do not strengthen yourself. That is true. But in the matter of wheat, we have wanted it, we want it very badly. We are facing a very severe crisis. We do not shout about it quite so much as perhaps we might, because it is unbecoming to shout. But the fact is that our need is very great, and we have welcomed the suggestion made in America, in the Congress there, that a large quantity of wheat will be coming, and we shall look forward to it.

NC: ...Do you have any closing message that you would like to convey to the American people?

JN: If any section of the American people has to listen to all that we have been talking about I imagine they are tired by this time. All I can say is this, and I am speaking with absolute honesty: when I went to the United States a year and a half ago I knew something about the American people. I had read about their history, their Constitution, their progress, their literature, so I looked

forward to that visit very greatly. I went there, and I saw large numbers of people in many fields; I saw many famous places. And the more I remained in America and the more people I saw, the more I got the impression of an essential friendliness, of frankness, of forthrightness—qualities which I value very greatly—and I returned with the feeling of great friendship and gratitude for America and her people.

8

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

I. Korea

1. Truce in Korea¹

...I favour a truce in Korea as suggested recently by Gen MacArthur.

A ceasefire or truce is always a good thing in itself. It gives an opportunity to go farther in that direction, and we will always be happy to be able to help any such step.

At present we have nothing in mind. What we may do will depend upon the opportunity. We are not likely to take a step that will probably fall flat.

I doubt that Gen MacArthur's suggestion is worth following up at this time, since it already has been rejected by the Chinese Government.² The Chinese have already accepted the principle of a temporary ceasefire, to be followed afterwards by discussion of a permanent ceasefire.

I don't see why we should not proceed on some such basis....

1. Interview with Robert Trumbull, correspondent of *The New York Times*, New Delhi, 31 March 1951. From *The New York Times*, 1 April 1951. Extracts.
2. Peking radio broadcast a statement on 29 March by the "Chinese People's Committee for World Peace against American Aggression" declaring that the offer would "go into the dustbin", and described MacArthur's statement as a threat to extend the Korean war to the Chinese mainland.

2. To V.K. Krishna Menon¹

New Delhi
April 17, 1951

My dear Krishna,

... We should of course keep on good and friendly terms with Morrison and you can certainly see him when you feel like it and explain our general attitude in regard to Korea, China and other matters. But I feel hesitant to make any precise proposal about Korea, etc. So far as America is concerned, I am sure that after MacArthur's dismissal, Truman, even if he so wished, dare not suggest any change of their policy. Even the attitude of China is not clear and

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML. Extracts.

they distrust the US so much that any proposal which is not dead clear, is apt to be rejected. Anyhow you can discuss this matter with Morrison. It is clear to me that there can be no settlement in the Far East unless China is brought into the picture. Also unless Formosa goes to China, though the procedure in regard to this may be subject to a discussion. As far as I can see, the US will not agree to Formosa being handed over, whatever else happens.² There is the impasse. Perhaps a little later a way out might be found.

The only way out that I can see is a conference of the Powers interested more or less on the basis of the principles enunciated by the UN, last January. If this is put forward, it will not be too easy for the US to reject them as they agreed to them previously.

I have been sending telegrams to Panikkar to find out the reactions of the Peking Government.³ I have not had a proper reply. Perhaps I might get it in a day or two after he has seen the Foreign Minister. I shall inform you of it.

About Kashmir, all we can do is to wait for developments. Unfortunately Shaikh Abdullah sometimes makes unwise statements in public.

Perhaps you have seen the Afghan Ambassador here, Najib Ullah Khan. He is a good friend of ours. The situation in Afghanistan is probably none too good, more especially from the economic point of view. The Pakistan embargo has had a serious effect.⁴ Politically and otherwise, the UK Government are wholly supporting Pakistan. We are friendly with Afghanistan and within certain limitations have told them that they have a large measure of our sympathy and diplomatic support. In the tribal areas on the border there is, I believe, a good deal of feeling in favour of Afghanistan. There was recently some trouble in Baluchistan against the Pakistan Government...⁵

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. On 11 April 1951, the US State Department made clear that British proposals to allow a choice to return Formosa to China was unacceptable.
3. In his cable, Panikkar informed Nehru that Chinese authorities were extremely reluctant to discuss the situation resulting from MacArthur's departure and seemed to attach no political significance to Truman's action.
4. To stop Afghanistan from pursuing its recognised interest in the welfare of its tribal people on the Pakistan side of the Durand Line, Pakistan first complained of Afghan incursions and then in 1950 closed the border.
5. Pakistan alleged violation of her territory in the Dobandi area of Baluchistan by some Afghan tribesmen and regular troops who were pushed back on 5 October 1950. Afghanistan denied this.

3. Cable to B.N. Rau¹

Your telegrams 181 and 182. In view of our opposition to original resolution branding China as aggressor and proposal for sanctions against China, it follows that we are opposed to all steps flowing from that resolution.² Our relations with China continue to be friendly and we cannot therefore support anything which directly or indirectly deals with China as an enemy nation. We feel that present proposal will not help in the achievement of UN objective of settlement in Korea by peaceful means. It will in fact make such settlement more difficult.

So far as we are concerned, there is no question of our sending any arms, ammunition, implements of war, atomic energy materials, or petroleum to China or any other country and we are not going to do so. As regards items which are described as useful for production of arms etc, this is vague and might include some normal articles which are not directly connected with the production of implements of war. Our present trade with China is limited to certain barter arrangements in exchange for rice or other foodgrains.³ We propose to continue this.

Please explain our position as set out above and state clearly that we cannot be a party to this resolution or any like resolution flowing from original Aggressor Resolution which we opposed, and therefore do not propose to participate in discussions which are based on this wrong approach. Having explained our position fully, you should abstain from voting.

1. New Delhi, 12 May 1951. JN Collection.
2. India and Burma were the only countries outside the Soviet bloc to vote in February 1951 against an American-sponsored resolution in the UN declaring Communist China an aggressor. India also refused to participate in the UN vote on 17 May, which imposed an arms embargo against Communist China and North Korea.
3. See *ante*, p. 68.

4. Cable to P. Subbarayan¹

Your letter of 17th May. As you know, we have dissociated ourselves completely from Embargo Resolution in United Nations. We feel that just as

1. New Delhi, 24 May 1951. JN Collection.

Aggressor Resolution did no good, but closed the door, this resolution also will not make much difference except to make peaceful settlement more difficult. The next step is likely to be proposal to blockade which ultimately is likely to lead to full-blooded war.

We cannot do much to stop this downward trend of events towards disaster but we try to check it as far as we can. We feel that India, Indonesia and Burma should hold together in our foreign policies in this regard and consult each other whenever necessary. There is plenty of feeling in United Kingdom against embargo and certainly against blockade as this is likely to ruin Hong Kong.²

2. On 1 September 1950, the US Government banned the unlicensed export of strategic goods to Hong Kong and the Portuguese colony of Macao, to prevent their re-export to Communist China, and added further items to its list of goods requiring licences for export to any country except Canada. From 3 December all exports to Communist China, Hong Kong and Macao, were subject to licence.

5. To Thakin Nu¹

New Delhi

May 24, 1951

My dear Thakin Nu,

Thank you for your letter of the 15th May which our Ambassador has forwarded to me.

We are all very vague about this proposed Chinese Goodwill Mission. There was some mention sometime ago about the Mission coming here in July-August, but the whole thing remained very much in the air and we heard nothing further about it. I confess I forgot about it completely. It was only when a message came from our Ambassador in Rangoon that I remembered about this proposed Mission.

We have no objection to the Mission coming here and from some points of view, it will be a good thing. Nevertheless, on the whole, I would rather that the Mission did not come soon. We are full of work and difficulties and it would not be easy for us to find much time for the Mission. Our Parliament has been sitting almost continuously since last November and I am thoroughly worn out.

On larger political grounds, that is the international situation and the conflict in Korea, it would be better for the Mission not to come in the near

1. JN Collection.

future. Such a visit is bound to create some embarrassment. The world is in an exceedingly nervous state and every little thing influences it this way or that. For this reason I entirely agree with you that it would be better for the Mission to be postponed.

We have had no formal reminder about this Mission from our Ambassador in Peking and therefore there is nothing for us to do about it. We do not propose to take the initiative.

The recent Embargo Resolution passed by the United Nations is, I think, most unfortunate. The old Aggressor Resolution was a wrong step and we opposed it. It has done no good to anybody, not even to those who supported it. All it did was to close the door for negotiations. Now the Embargo Resolution is another step in the wrong direction. This will make no real difference. The next step, almost inevitably, will be a blockade. If this comes, it will be a near step to war. So American policy is drifting rather rapidly towards a big war.

In this matter, it seems to me important that India, Burma and Indonesia should pull together and cooperate at Lake Success and elsewhere. I am glad we did that when the Embargo Resolution came up for consideration. Any attempt to extend this to a blockade later must certainly be resisted.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Ceasefire in Korea¹

...Question: Have you had any reports from your Ambassador in Peking that there is likely to be a ceasefire in Korea?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not know what to say except that as far as we can judge there do not appear to be any very promising prospects of it. So far as we are concerned, we have taken no positive step of any kind and we do not propose to take any positive step unless we are in a position to help. If we can help, we shall take it.

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 11 June 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 51–57, 247–248, 323–325, 394–397, 446, 450–452, 462–463, 470, 487–488, 525–526.

Q: Has there been any request for sending troops from India?

JN: No, we have had no request. There is no formal request for troops although there has been a great deal about it in the Press. Apart from some ideas being thrown about here and there in conversation, there is no formal request....

7. The Embargo Resolution¹

I think we should inform the UK High Commission (and the USA Embassy also, if an enquiry is made from them) that our position in regard to the Embargo Resolution was stated clearly by our representative in the UN. Shri B.N. Rau's statement to this effect might be quoted briefly. Perhaps the instructions we sent him in this behalf might be enough. It might be further added that we feel that any such embargo is not likely to help, to any appreciable extent, the objectives that the UN have in view. It is likely to lead to the next step of a blockade of China and this would be a dangerous step and likely to lead to an extension of the war, which it is the declared objective of the UN, to avoid. For these reasons, we could not support this Embargo Resolution in the UN.²

It should further be stated that their Embargo Resolution does not, in effect, apply to us because such limited trade as we have with China has been generally in regard to articles which are not included in the prohibited list. So far as we can find out, the only exception in the past has been, to a slight extent, in regard to certain articles in rubber manufacture, such as tyres. These too went chiefly to Hong Kong. We have already prohibited the export of rubber tyres. Most of the other items in the prohibited list, being in short supply in India, are strictly controlled and are imported into India from abroad. The re-export of these imports is prohibited. Certain items in the list are permitted to be exported, such as Indian machinery and mill work, but none of these has in fact been exported to China and there has been no demand for

1. Note to B.N. Chakravarty, Secretary, Commonwealth Relations, MEA, 14 June 1951. JN Collection. Extracts.
2. India was one of the nine countries which abstained from voting in favour of the Embargo Resolution against China which had been presented to the Additional Measures Committee of the UN General Assembly by the US delegate on 3 May 1951 and was adopted by the Committee on 14 May 1951.

them from China from India. We are ourselves in need of such articles and wish to conserve supplies in the country.

It will thus be seen that we have no trade with China in regard to any materials that can be called strategic and that we ourselves being in short supply of such materials, there is no question of our supplying them. The export of such materials is either banned or strictly controlled. There is thus no possibility of our exporting them either to China or to any other country.

A note to the above effect can be given to the UK High Commission. They may be informed also that we have no comments to make to their list of prohibited materials. If necessity arises, a similar note might be given to the US Embassy, but only if asked for.

A similar message should be sent to our representative in the United Nations and he can convey it to the Additional Measures Committee. I do not think any such report to the Additional Measures Committee need lead to difficulty....

As for controlling the export of any materials, which are on the prohibited list and are not controlled by us at present, we need take no such step at present, but Commerce and Industry Ministry should watch developments and report to External Affairs what the position is from time to time. If necessity arises, we can certainly control the export of such materials, because nearly all of them are required in the country itself.

8. To B.N. Rau¹

New Delhi
June 23, 1951

My dear B.N.,

... Graham is due here soon,² unfortunately at a very wrong time. Almost all our Ministers are away, tired out by the long sessions and other work and myself completely exhausted and I am going soon for a week to Kashmir.³ Bajpai is on leave, but I have asked him to come back here to meet Graham. About Kashmir, our attitude has been made perfectly clear and we are not going to budge from it. I understand that the US are going to try their pressure tactics again. The only effect that this will have is to encourage Pakistan to

1. B.N. Rau Papers, NMML. Extracts.

2. Graham met Nehru on 4 July 1951.

3. Nehru was in Kashmir from 26 June to 4 July 1951.

start further aggression and indeed war.⁴ There are many indications of this happening in the not distant future. I think it should be made clear to everyone concerned that in this matter we cannot submit to any further bullying.

I do not understand why people should talk at this moment about a peaceful settlement in Korea and blame China for doing nothing.⁵ I do not myself see what China can do when the UN goes on passing resolution after resolution against her.⁶ In any event there is not the least chance of China submitting to anything which she considers derogatory to her...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. In July 1951 India complained to the UN that Pakistan had violated the ceasefire line and carried out raids in Kashmir.
5. Rau further mentioned, "there are all kinds of rumours about a peaceful settlement in Korea but since China is saying nothing, no one entertains much hope. As the result of the Senate hearings following General MacArthur's recall, the USA attitude and to some extent even that of the UK has hardened both as to Formosa and the Chinese seat in the UN, although in other respects, each day's testimony merely adds to the prevailing confusion."
6. See *ante*, p. 431.

9. To A. Soekarno¹

New Delhi
June 23, 1951

My dear Soekarno,

Your letter dated June 2, refers to the Embargo Resolution recently passed by the United Nations in regard to the export of strategic materials to China.² As you know, we, in common with Indonesia, expressed our disapproval of this resolution. I am quite sure that it was a wrong step, just as the previous Aggressor Resolution was a dangerously wrong step.³

The Korean situation has reached a stage of absolute deadlock and attrition. I see no way of either party succeeding. The USA cannot defeat China or make her surrender. Much less can China do that to USA in Korea. There was some chance of a settlement before the Aggressor Resolution was passed. That Resolution put an end to it without doing much good to anybody. Then

1. JN Collection.

2. See *ante*, pp. 431-432, 434-435.

3. See *ante*, pp. 431-432.

came the Embargo Resolution. Probably this will be followed by a proposal for a blockade, which can only lead to an extension of the war. I understand that the United Kingdom is opposed to the blockade, but step by step they are driven to follow the lead given by the USA.

The Korean question has got entangled with two others, namely Formosa and the Japanese peace treaty, both very difficult. The USA is getting more and more tied up with this Korean war. They think that China and Russia have to be held in Asia. In other words, the USA consider their advance frontiers to be in Eastern Asia and the Pacific Ocean as a kind of internal lake under their control. The Chinese, on the other hand, consider all this as aggression of the US.

The issues, therefore, are very deep and for the moment I see no way leading to a solution. I have no doubt that, both in the US and China, vast numbers of people desire peace and yet some evil fate drives the world to war.

We have made it repeatedly clear to the US that with all our goodwill for them, we do not wish to change our independent foreign policy or domestic policy. They have said that they entirely understand our position and do not wish to bring any pressure to this end. Nevertheless, of course, they would very much like us to change.

In regard to the Embargo Resolution, we are not as directly affected as perhaps you might be. We do not send any strategic materials to China, because we want them ourselves. Yet difficulties might, of course, arise. In your case the situation is less simple and, as you have pointed out, rubber is the crux of it. Rubber affects your economy considerably. As a matter of fact, rubber affects Malayan and Ceylon economy a great deal also.

I am glad to learn from you that the new Cabinet in Indonesia has resulted in greater cooperation between the major parties.⁴

I have naturally read with care what you have written about Kashmir. I am afraid, this problem is becoming more and more intricate. So far as we are concerned, it is not a question of any territory belonging to us. As it is, Kashmir is semi-independent and is carrying out her own independent internal policy which is often different from ours. It had made considerable progress, administratively and economically. Conditions are more or less normal and large numbers of tourists are going there. I have no doubt at all that the future of Kashmir can only be and will be determined by the people of Kashmir, and whatever their decision is we shall naturally abide by it. Pakistan's

4. A new Cabinet was formed in Indonesia on 26 April 1951 by Sukiman, Chairman of the Masjumi Party, after the Government headed by Mohammed Natsir resigned on 20 March 1951. After inter-party negotiations lasting thirty seven days, Sukiman reached agreement with other party leaders on the composition of a new Coalition Government. The members of the new administration took office on 27 April 1951.

attitude in this matter has been so highly objectionable that I am amazed at it. For months and months we hear and read nothing but threats and curses and warnings of war. It is difficult to deal with this kind of thing in a calm manner and no great country can be bullied by these tactics. It is not a question of my being attached to Kashmir. It is a question of the progressive elements in Kashmir not being allowed to be crushed by the reactionary and bigoted elements from Pakistan, who would ruin the culture and arts and crafts of Kashmir, as indeed they did at the beginning of the raid three and a half years ago.

I am convinced that but for the attitude of the USA and the UK we would probably have arrived at some settlement about Kashmir. But the UK carries out some old policy, which has repeatedly met with failure in the Middle East and which is now facing a crisis in Iran.

Your suggestion of exchanging Kashmir for East Pakistan has no reality. We can hardly treat vast areas of peoples as commodities for exchange. But, apart from this, East Pakistan is from the population point of view and financially, far the most important part of Pakistan. It is from East Pakistan that the Pakistan Government derives its major revenues. They would probably collapse without East Pakistan.

I have long felt that the only way to deal with the Kashmir problem is to stop this constant propaganda for war and interference from outside. If we had some chance of viewing things normally, we would go a long way towards a settlement.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon¹

New Delhi
27 June 1951

Your telegram 9619 dated 26 June. Chinese Government never asked us to seek elucidation of statement on Korean peace terms by Acheson.² But on 8th

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML. Extracts.
2. Krishna Menon mentioned that the *Daily Telegraph's* Washington correspondent reported, "About two weeks ago Peking asked India to seek elucidation in Washington of statement of Korea peace terms by Acheson." He informed Nehru that he was asked about this as well as about India's general attitude towards peace proposals. He requested Nehru to apprise him of the whole situation.

Panikkar asked for a clarification of the radio broadcast summary of what Acheson is alleged to have said viz, that America was prepared for a reliable ceasefire on 38th parallel and that there is no reason why Chinese admission to the United Nations should not be discussed in that body. Panikkar thought if this represented the official US policy the matter might be taken up with the Chinese. On 19th June Panikkar sent another telegram which stated *inter alia* that a ceasefire without prospects of settlement of Formosa and Japanese problem is wholly in American interests but Formosa and Japanese peace treaty have now become major issues and Chinese consider that to accept a ceasefire without agreement on these two issues would be to play into American hands and throw away the only chance of putting effective pressure on America.

2. Immediately on receipt of Panikkar's telegram of 8 June we asked for a clarification from American Ambassador in New Delhi and received a reply to the following effect on 23rd June. If there were reliable assurances that aggression would not be resumed, a ceasefire is possible but the issues relating to Formosa and the admission of Chinese People's Government to the UN does not constitute a part of the Korean question. US take the position that if the attack on the UN forces ceases the question of admission of the Chinese People's Government to the UN and the disposal of Formosa would go back to the stage where they were before the aggression in Korea began. This means that if the Korean business is settled these questions can at least be discussed though the US would continue to press their point of view. So long as the fighting continues these questions cannot even be discussed. In view of the American clarification and the Chinese view as reported by Panikkar on 19th June we felt that there was no satisfactory basis for an approach to the Chinese People's Government....

4. ... Our Moscow Embassy has not been able to throw any light on Malik's 24th June proposal. We have not done anything recently in regard to peace in Korea.

This is for your information.

8

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

II. China and Tibet

1. China and Tibet¹

...Question: Regarding Tibet, have the Chinese Government shown any change in their attitude in recent times?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Change from what?

Q: From the attitude they took up in the notes they presented to us in reply to our notes to them?²

JN: I don't think I can answer that very precisely. The Chinese attitude has been throughout that Tibet is an integral part (when I say throughout, I mean in the last quarter of a century or more) of the Chinese State but an autonomous part. Now what measure of autonomy etc, there was or there may be is a matter to be clarified. So broadly speaking, the attitude has been the same. But it has varied I suppose from time to time. I presume that it is on that basis that talks are likely to take place—I am not dead sure—but I have an idea that some representatives of the Dalai Lama are proceeding to Peking for the purpose.

Q: By a change of attitude I meant that when the Dalai Lama's representatives were willing to talk the Chinese were not prepared to do so and instead sent their troops. Has there been a change in that regard, say for withdrawal of troops?

JN: I don't know about any change in particular attitude but the Chinese troops, to begin with, came in just a very small distance in Eastern Tibet. I cannot speak of individuals straying further. I replied to a question in Parliament yesterday about some Chinese soldiers coming into India. As a matter of fact one unfortunate Chinese soldier lost his track and penetrated into Indian territory

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 13 March 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 67–69, 103, 153, 295, 355–356, 361–366, 482–484, 502–505.
2. Early in October 1950 the Chinese Government took military action and Chinese troops entered the eastern parts of Tibet. On 26 October the Government of India sent a note expressing "surprise and regret" at the invasion of Tibet, and at the fact that China sought a solution of her problems with that country "by force instead of by the slower and more enduring methods of peaceful approach." The Chinese reply of 30 October asserted the Communist Government's claim that Tibet was "an integral part of Chinese territory" and said the matter was "entirely domestic problem of China." A second Indian protest was sent on 31 October and the Chinese answer dated 17 November, merely reiterated that China possessed "sovereign rights" in Tibet.

by mistake. That was exaggerated as some kind of Chinese forces coming in. But, in fact, for the last, may be six months, I forget the period, to our knowledge there has been no movement of Chinese troops at all except that initial movement that took place, and there they have been. And whatever other methods they have adopted, they have not been military methods.

Q: What is the strength of the Chinese troops in Tibet?

JN: The Chinese troops who came into Tibet were relatively small in number. In China proper there is no doubt there are large numbers.

Q: In settling terms is Tibet likely to be intimidated?

JN: Any small country dealing with a big country is likely to be intimidated.

Q: The present situation in Tibet would not have arisen if the Tibetan delegation had left before September.³

JN: Possibly not.

Q: The delegation should have been advised to go in September?

JN: We advised the delegation to go to Peking. We did not mention dates.

Q: The Peking Government wanted the Government of India to advise the delegation about it.

JN: No question of any date. The question came up later. It is true the Chinese Government wanted the Tibetan delegates to go there. And independently of that, even before that, we did advise the delegates to deal with the Chinese but no dates were before us anywhere.

Q: Is our Ambassador in Peking coming here for consultations with regard to Tibetan affairs?

JN: No. There is no such idea yet.

3. In April 1950, a seven-men Tibetan Mission, appointed by the Dalai Lama's Government in Lhasa arrived in India to make preliminary contacts with representatives of the Peking Government with the aim of establishing better Sino-Tibetan relations and reaching a settlement of the differences between the two countries. Early in June the Mission made arrangements to fly to Hong Kong for negotiations with the Peking Government. As visas were denied to it by the British authorities, the Mission remained in India throughout the summer and autumn of 1950.

Q: Why did Chinese troops come to Rima on our border?

JN: Rima is not our border post. Rima is in Tibetan territory. As far as I can remember, a small detachment was reported to have reached Rima.

Q: Was it regarded as a danger?

JN: It has never been our border.

Q: India has long-standing relations with Tibet on trade and other matters. If there is a change in the set-up in Tibet, what would happen to these relations?

JN: There has been considerable trade between Tibet and India and though not prevented by anybody, it has been affected somewhat by changing conditions and apprehensions. Nevertheless, it is continuing and as soon as any kind of normality is restored, I have no doubt it will continue. Of course, if by any chance some kind of new order interferes, then you have to see. At the moment, there is nothing to prevent it.

Q: But what about Indian troops there?

JN: I am not aware of any Indian troops in any territory which is Chinese, regarded by Chinese as her soil.

Q: In Gyantse?

JN: This is a different matter. Obviously our troops, two detachments, are there. They were kept there under treaty arrangements for the protection of the trade route.⁴ They will stay so long as other arrangements are not made for that protection. We are there with the goodwill of the people concerned. We are not there in occupation of any foreign territory but in order to give protection to our trade routes with the consent of the Governments concerned. If the Governments concerned make adequate provisions for their protection, then the necessity for further protection does not arise. Anyhow, we can remain there by agreement, not by force of arms....

4. India had the right to maintain an agent in Lhasa and establish trade agencies at Gyantse and Yatung, for the protection of which a military escort not exceeding 225 was authorized to be "stationed along the (West Bengal) Lhasa trade route."

2. The Sino-Tibetan Agreement¹

...Question: Now, Tibet.

Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not know much more about it than you probably know. The story about an agreement being reached between the People's Government in China and the Tibetan authorities has reached us too.² That is all; no further development has taken place to our knowledge. It is not proper for me to react to something which is not complete, which is not fully known. Throughout this period some kind of Chinese suzerainty has been recognised in the past as well as Tibetan autonomy. We have certain interests there which are not political but which are cultural, etc, which we should like to preserve. These are our approaches and we should like to preserve our cultural and trade interests in a friendly way with the people concerned.

Q: Will the presence of Chinese troops in Tibet hinder preservation of India's interests?

JN: The facts are rather vague about the presence of forces, etc, and to what extent they might or might not hinder is also therefore not clear to me. Nothing of that kind has been suggested. Once the subject comes up, we shall naturally discuss it.

Q: Is there any indication of interference taking place towards India's interests?

JN: No interference whatever.

Q: Did you have any account from our Ambassador in Peking about the Treaty terms?

JN: The only account we had were some celebrations in Peking, celebrations in the sense of some meeting or meeting or some other occasion, where the signing of the treaty was celebrated by toasts to various peoples including the Dalai Lama—both the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama....

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 11 June 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 51–57, 247–248, 323–325, 394–397, 433–434, 450–452, 462–463, 470, 487–488, 525–526.
2. The 17-point agreement between China and Tibet signed on 23 May 1951 at Peking legalised the stationing of Communist Chinese troops in Tibet. Peking promised not to interfere in the "present internal administration" in Tibet or with the position of the Dalai Lama as Tibet's spiritual ruler.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
III. The Iran Oil Dispute

1. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon¹

Your telegram 9198 dated May 24.² UK High Commissioner approached us about Persian oil dispute and asked for our good offices to help peaceful negotiated settlement. We told him that we were always in favour of peaceful settlement. So far as nationalisation is concerned it was entirely for Persian Government to decide. Even in India we were in favour of progressive nationalisation. We would welcome settlement by negotiation, but we were reluctant to interfere. Feeling in Iran was running high and American intervention had caused great resentment.³ This made atmosphere unfavourable even to informal and friendly but entirely independent approach by us. We have kept our representative in Teheran⁴ informed accordingly.

We are not aware of any development towards peace settlement in Korea. Chinese Government's attitude, as reported by Panikkar, is one of resentment at passing of Embargo Resolution which, according to them, will lead to next step of blockade which will lead to war.

1. New Delhi, 25 May 1951. JN Collection.
2. Krishna Menon said there were speculations about India being approached by Nye on this matter and of a peace settlement in Korea on the basis of restoration of *status quo ante*.
3. On 18 May 1951, in a statement personally approved by Acheson, the US State Department appealed for "friendly negotiation" in the oil dispute, warning Iran at the same time of the serious consequences of any unilateral action on her part.
4. B.K. Kapur was the Indian Chargé d' Affaires in Teheran.

2. Cable to A.K. Azad¹

Your telegram No 9261 dated 29th May.² Persian Oil Dispute. We feel it will be exceedingly risky for us to take any step in this matter at this stage. Neither party has asked us to intervene and any initiative on our part might well lead to grave misunderstanding and entanglements. This is not merely a matter between United Kingdom and Iran but involves many other considerations. We are of opinion therefore that we should abstain from any action and for the present merely watch developments.

1. New Delhi, 30 May 1951. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML.
2. Azad, who was in Britain at this time, had favoured India's intercession in Iranian oil dispute.

3. Nationalisation of the Iranian Oil Industry¹

...Question: Now, Iran.

Jawaharlal Nehru: Here again, naturally we are interested in a variety of ways. First of all, it is a neighbour country of ours and we have friendly relations with them and if anything happens there it is apt to lead to a breach of world peace and so we are greatly interested in a peaceful settlement. According to the accounts that have reached us and which have appeared in the Press, apparently the basis of nationalisation of the oil industry there has been accepted and it is more a question of how to bring it about, which presumably they are going to discuss.² There are so many conflicts, international and national, in Iran that there is always the danger of something happening.

Q: Is there any alternative source of supply of oil if the supply from Iran is stopped?

JN: Well, I do not think there is any lack of oil in the world, even apart from the Iranian oil. We have of course no oil, we have to get it from the principal oil concerns of the world, so that one could get it elsewhere. But there is no reason why we should not continue to get it from Iran. I do not see why it should be assumed that the Iranian oil concern should not function with the same efficiency as now.

Q: What is your opinion about the legal position involved regarding the nationalisation of the oil company under the background of the 1933 Agreement?

JN: First of all, such issues cannot be considered from a purely legal point of view, when they involved national interests, large numbers of human beings and the like. Secondly—I have not got the 1933 Agreement—but there is no doubt about it that all these agreements in the past with the Middle Asian countries and elsewhere cannot possibly be called equal agreements between equal parties. So you get sometimes a conflict between what might be called the strictly legal position and the facts of the situation. Normally the facts of the situation prevail...

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 11 June 1951. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 51–57, 247–248, 323–325, 394–397, 433–434, 446, 462–463, 470, 487–488, 525–526.
2. On 11 June 1951, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's delegation arrived in Teheran for negotiations with the Iranian Government.

Q: There is an important thing, ie, the Treaty of 1933.³ What is your opinion about it?

JN: Certainly sympathetic.

Q: ...You said that such issues as the issue of the nationalisation of the oil industry in Iran cannot be considered from a strictly legal point of view, as the Persian agreement or other similar agreements were not between equal parties and should not therefore be considered as legal.... The small power can always say after ten years, "We entered into this agreement under duress."...

JN: The 1933 Agreement between Iran and the Oil Company was a kind of unequal treaty. If this is so, no treaty between a great power and a small power would be considered equal and therefore binding. Well, that is perfectly true, partly. It is not so much a question of a great power and a small power, but a great power and colonial regions. Switzerland may be a small power but nobody is likely to question any treaty with Switzerland as being unequal, or that Switzerland is being exploited or undue pressure is exercised in Switzerland or Norway or Sweden, etc. But when you deal with colonial territories or semi-colonial territories as in Asia, that argument applies completely. One of the things that successive Chinese Governments have been trying to do for the last more than a generation has been to remove unequal treaties. The conclusion of an unequal treaty is bound to be attacked everywhere, because even judged from the facts—apart from the question of great power and small power—one can judge whether such a treaty was a treaty which two powers functioning equally agreed to. Apart from that, in the changing world, in a period of rapid transition, it is exceedingly difficult to hold on to something which was made under entirely different conditions, something which vitally affects a nation, affects a nation's resources.

Q: There is an important thing, ie, the Treaty of 1933.³ What is your opinion about it?

JN: I have not got the treaty with me. But every country should be prepared to reconsider, re-examine all these treaties so as to bring them up-to-date.

Q: There are about 1,000 Indians in the oil-fields. If there is trouble or even war, how would they be protected? Will the British protect them?

3. On 16 May 1928, a treaty between Persia and Britain was signed, but in 1932 relations between the two countries became strained due to the Shah's cancellation of the concession granted to the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. The case came before the League of Nations and was finally settled by a new agreement made on 29 April 1933, which gave a large share of oil profits to Persia.

JN: Well, if there is any disaster or any trouble or war they take the normal chances of what happens. Not that they are in any danger now; they are safe enough. If there is danger, we will certainly take the help of others to remove them or protect them without coming into conflict with anybody....

4. Draft Message to B.K. Kapur¹

We would like you to see the Iranian Prime Minister,² if he is well enough, and convey to him our Prime Minister's anxiety about his health and his hopes that he will recover soon at this critical juncture. Our Prime Minister has already expressed his sympathy for Iran in the present oil dispute and he was pleased to receive the message of thanks from the Iranian Government. He is anxious that the present dispute should be settled peacefully in accordance with the Iran's national interests and without endangering world peace. Any conflict on this issue would be most unfortunate not only for the countries concerned but for the world. The Iranian oil fields are a great and valuable national asset for Iran and an important source of oil for various countries. Any injury to these installations, or the stoppage of oil supplies would be harmful most of all to Iran herself. He earnestly hopes therefore, that, in the interests of Iran as well as of the world, a peaceful settlement will be arrived at in a spirit of conciliation which must enhance the prestige of Iran and assure her of the continued working of this great national asset.

Please make it clear that we have no desire to interfere, but make this suggestion in all friendliness. If the Prime Minister is not well enough to receive you, you can deliver this message through some other Minister with the request that it be conveyed to the Prime Minister.

1. Note to Foreign Secretary, 23 June 1951. JN Collection. This message to India's Chargé d'Affaires in Teheran was drafted by Nehru. The message was not sent. See the following item.
2. Mohammed Mossaddeq (1881-1967); Iranian lawyer and politician; Prime Minister, 1951-53. He took ill on 14 June 1951.

5. Revised Message to B.K. Kapur¹

Subsequent to my dictating the note given above, I have seen the later news from Iran.² I am now rather doubtful about the message I suggested you might send to our Chargé. Things have gone so far in Iran that our intervention would do little good and might be resented. I suggest, therefore, that you might send the following message to our Chargé and not the one I have suggested previously:

We are naturally following anxiously developments in Iran over the oil dispute. We have no desire to interfere and any intervention is likely to be resented without producing any good result. You may, however, if and when you consider it suitable, communicate to the Iranian Government, in such manner as you think fit our anxiety that the present dispute might be settled peacefully in accordance with Iran's national interests and without endangering world peace. You might point out that our Prime Minister has already expressed his sympathy for Iran in this matter and that he was pleased to receive the message from the Iranian Government. Any conflict on this issue would be most unfortunate not only for the countries concerned but for the world. The Iranian oil fields are a great and valuable national asset for Iran and an important source of oil for various countries. A peaceful settlement would be in the interests of Iran as well as of the world and would enhance the prestige of Iran.

You might also enquire on our behalf about the Prime Minister's health and express our hope that he will recover soon at this critical juncture.

1. Note to Foreign Secretary, 23 June 1951. JN Collection.

2. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's delegation left Teheran on 22 June 1951 by air for London after the breakdown of negotiations with the Iranian Government on the nationalisation of the Company. According to the Company's spokesman in Basra on 23 June, the British employees were likely to give an emphatic "no" to any offer to work for the Persian National Oil Company.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

IV. The Japanese Peace Treaty

1. To Thakin Nu¹

New Delhi
April 19, 1951

My dear Thakin Nu,

Thank you for your letter of April 10th about the proposed Japanese peace treaty.² I shall gladly meet your Ambassador³ here and discuss this matter with him. I have felt, however, that before discussing it with him we should ourselves be clear about it. We have received two copies of draft treaties—one from the USA Government and the other from the UK Government. These are being examined at present. As soon as we have completed our examination, I shall discuss this matter with your Ambassador and write to you also.

Apart from the individual clauses in it, this whole question of a Japanese peace treaty raises larger political issues affecting the world situation. You have yourself indicated some of these questions in your letter. We have to be very careful about them. As far as one can see, there is little chance of a joint treaty to which all the Powers concerned can subscribe. So, it becomes a question of bilateral treaties. The real difficulty is that Japan, for all practical purposes, is being used as an American base. Naturally, we cannot be parties to this.

It seems to me quite clear that no Japanese peace treaty will have very much value unless there is China's concurrence, or, at any rate, it is not aimed against China directly or indirectly.

A brief answer to the question in Paragraph 4 of your letter is that a great deal depends upon the nature and terms of the treaty. Hence, the necessity for a careful examination.

With all good wishes and kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.
2. The proposed draft of the Japanese peace treaty outlined by Dulles in a speech at Los Angeles was submitted by the US Government on 30 March 1951 to all the member Governments of the Far Eastern Commission, including the Soviet Union, accompanied by a memorandum explaining that the document was tentative but represented the composite views of the United States and other Powers.
3. U Kyin.

2. Cable to Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

Following are our views on draft Japanese peace treaty. Please communicate them to US Government.

Begins. Government of India have carefully examined US draft of proposed peace treaty with Japan. They have also had opportunity of studying British draft. Delay in communicating their comments, which is due to pressure of Parliamentary session no less than to importance of subject-matter of treaty, is regretted.

2. Government of India think it premature, at this stage, to comment on language of draft or provision of secondary importance. They have approached both US and British drafts from two points of view that appear basic:

(i) Japan should be admitted to the community of free sovereign nations without imposition of conditions that would leave behind legitimate sense of grievance. Any affront to national pride or limitation of sovereignty of Japan should be avoided;

(ii) Terms of treaty should not be such as to give just cause for offence to Powers like USSR and China, which are vitally interested in Far East, and thus imperil prospects of stable and enduring peace. For this reason, Government of India consider it essential that People's Government of China should be invited to express its views on draft treaty (Russia, it is understood, was approached, but has refused to discuss draft).

3. *Comments on specific clauses*

(i) *Preamble* Government of India prefer American² to British draft.³ Paras 2 and 3 of British draft do not conform to Government of India's first desideratum stated in paragraph 2 above.

1. New Delhi, 16 May 1951. JN Collection.
2. According to the preamble of the American draft the Allied Powers and Japan were to treat each other as sovereign equals cooperating in a friendly association to promote their common welfare and maintain international peace and security. Japan was also to apply for membership in the United Nations and affirm its faith in the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and follow the internationally accepted fair practices in public and private trade and commerce and be facilitated by the Allied Powers in the realization of these intentions.
3. In the British preamble the two points stressed were: (1) that People's China was to be treated as one of the "Allied and associated Powers" and (2) Japan being a militant regime must own its "share of responsibility for the war"; the points not accepted by the United States.

(ii) *Territorial* (a) Government of India feel strongly that provision on lines of Article 4 in British draft whereby Japan cedes to China the island of Formosa and the Pescadores Islands should figure in the treaty. Question as to when Formosa should be returned to China can be considered separately.

(b) Japanese have strong sentimental attachment to territories referred to in Article 4, Chapter III of American draft.⁴ These islands are also inhabited predominantly by Japanese. Government of India think that they should continue under Japanese sovereignty.

(c) Article 5 (Part of Sakhalin and Kurile Islands) has to be read with 19 of Chapter VIII of the American draft.⁵ These territories are already in possession of Soviet Union and Government of India feel that qualification envisaged in Chapter VIII (19) will be provocative to USSR with no compensating advantage.

(iii) *Security* Chapter IV (7) of the American draft. Government of India consider words "participated in by one or more of the Allied Powers" to be unnecessary.⁶ There seems no likelihood of Japan making arrangement for collective self-defence with any Power or Powers with which it is not now on friendly terms at least in any foreseeable future. Words in question are calculated to offend Japanese sentiment as limitation of Japanese sovereignty as also Powers that may be unable to sign proposed treaty.

4. According to it, the United States proposed to the United Nations to place under its trusteeship system, with the United States as the administering authority, the Ryukyu Islands, the Bonin Islands and the Marcus Island.

5. Japan was to return to the Soviet Union the southern part of Sakhalin Island as well as all islands adjacent to it and was also to hand over to her the Kurile Islands.

6. Chapter IV read: "...The Allied Powers recognise that Japan as a sovereign nation possesses what the Charter of the United Nations refers to as the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence and that Japan may voluntarily enter into a collective security arrangement or arrangements participated in by one or more of the Allied Powers. Such arrangements shall be designed solely for security against armed attack."

(iv) *Bilateral Treaties* (Article 20 of British draft and Chapter V, para 10 of American draft).⁷ Government of India would like to be enlightened as to the reasons for not making the provision regarding the maintenance or revival of bilateral treaties between Japan and "Allied Powers" reciprocal.

(v) *End of Occupation* (Article 22 of British draft). There seems no corresponding provision in American draft; Government of India consider such provision necessary.

(vi) *Reparation* Part V, section 1, of British draft. Government of India favour omission of Article 23.⁸

(vii) *Chapter VIII (Final Clauses of American Draft)*. Government of India are not clear regarding position vis-a-vis Japan of an Allied Power, which, for some reason, finds itself unable to sign treaty as it may emerge from present discussions.⁹ In their view, failure to agree upon terms of proposed treaty, which is to become valid on signature by majority of Governments now represented on Far Eastern Commission, should not debar non-signatory Governments from signing separate treaty with Japan after treaty now under discussion has been signed by proposed majority. So long as terms of such separate treaty or treaties do not constitute threat to peace or confer upon signatory Power greater advantages than those provided for signatories to treaty under discussion in its final form, there should be no objection to freedom to sign separate treaty.

7. After stipulating that all occupation forces of the Allied Powers should be withdrawn ninety days after the treaty came into force, the British draft stated: "Nothing in this provision shall, however, prevent the stationing or retention of foreign armed forces in Japanese territory under or in consequence of any bilateral or multilateral agreements which have been or may be made between one or more of the Allied Powers, on the one hand, and Japan on the other." The American draft read: "Each of the Allied Powers, within a year after the present Treaty has come into force between it and Japan, will notify Japan which of its pre-war bilateral treaties with Japan it wishes to keep in force or revive for and such treaties shall continue in force or be revived except for any provisions thereof not in conformity with the present Treaty, which provisions shall be deemed deleted. All such treaties not so notified shall be regarded as abrogated."

8. Article 23 of the British draft earmarked Japanese gold stocks for reparations.

9. Chapter VIII provided that except for the provisions of Article 11 according to which Japan was to renounce all special rights and interests in China, the treaty should not confer any rights, title or benefits to or upon any State unless and until it signed, ratified or adhered to the treaty; nor, with exception should any right, title or interest of Japan be deemed to be diminished or prejudiced thereof in favour of the State which did not sign or ratify or adhere to the treaty.

3. An Indo-Japanese Treaty¹

The first question to be clear about is what our objective is in this matter of the Japanese treaty. We would like a treaty to be signed. We are convinced that any treaty which ignores or leaves out the interests of China and the USSR will have little stability. The proper thing to do of course is for the treaty to be agreed to not only by the UK and USA but also by China and USSR. That, in present circumstances, is not at all feasible. The alternative is a treaty between some countries and Japan, leaving out for the present China and the USSR. This can only be considered if that treaty contains nothing in it which can be positively objected to by China or the USSR and which leaves the door open for China and the USSR to come in, or any other treaties between Japan and China and the USSR, which are not in conflict with the previous treaties.

So far as India is concerned, we could only be a party to a treaty if these points mentioned above are clearly guarded against and we do not range ourselves in this matter against China. That is rather difficult because of the opposing viewpoints of the USA and China. Yet we cannot rule it out completely. I would personally prefer a separate bilateral treaty between India and Japan. That would give us scope to say what we want to say and not to be tied down by some clauses in the Anglo-American treaty with Japan. Our bilateral treaty need not be in conflict with the Anglo-American treaty.

It is clear that we cannot participate in any treaty or negotiations which include the Chinese Nationalist Government. In our opinion, the Government to be included is the People's Republic of China. That again is not feasible at present. The only other course seems to be for a direct treaty with Japan, for the moment excluding China but keeping China's interests in view. Much will depend, as SG has said, on the wording of such a treaty.

Any treaty with Japan must necessarily mention Formosa. The US draft does not go far enough and we cannot accept it in this matter.² The least that can be said is that Formosa must go to China which, according to us, can only mean the People's Republic. It might be added that the actual transfer should take place as a part of the Far Eastern settlement. Any mention of this question being delayed "so long as China is obstructing in Korea", will be a wrong way to put it because it will immediately give rise to irritation and opposition in China.

1. Note to Secretary-General, MEA, 1 June 1951. JN Collection.

2. The US draft for a Japanese peace treaty provided that there would be a repudiation by Japan of all rights, titles and claims to Korea, Formosa, the Pescadores and the Antarctic area.

As for communicating the draft treaty to China, I would hesitate to do so on behalf of India, until it was fairly clear to me that its terms were such as to be considered by China. If, however, these terms are, in our opinion, such that the People's Government of China might not object to, we might be willing to communicate it to the People's Government.

I agree with SG that this appears to be rather an academic question at present because of the US attitude and the extreme probability of the UK acquiescing in the American position regarding Formosa. We cannot give up this point.

This might be communicated informally to the UK High Commission.

4. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon¹

According to latest information available both UK and USA disposed

- (a) to make no provision in Japanese peace treaty for return of Taiwan to China, and
- (b) to retain Ryukyu and Bonin Islands, in our view, part of Japanese homeland, for US trusteeship under United Nations.

We attach highest importance to provision in treaty for return of Taiwan to China though time and manner of this may be settled later and for retention of Kurile and Ryukyu by Japan. We have therefore informally told UK High Commissioner that if treaty does not conform on these two points to our view we shall be unable to sign it. He is informing his Government.

This is for your information only.

1. New Delhi, 4 June 1951. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML.

5. Draft of the Japanese Peace Treaty¹

...Question: Coming back to the international situation, Sir, what are your views on the Japanese peace treaty? There is some confusion because you have a UK draft, a US draft and all that.

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 11 June 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 51-57, 247-248, 323-325, 394-397, 433-434, 446, 450-452, 470, 487-488, 525-526.

Jawaharlal Nehru: Now, that is a big subject. We have received rough drafts just for consideration without any finality from the UK and from the USA. Those drafts themselves vary *inter se* and we have expressed our general reactions to them. That is all. Naturally we would like to have an early Japanese peace treaty and naturally we would like Japan to function as an independent country. You know that this delay in considering this matter has been due to the fact that there were two different approaches. One said that four or five Powers should deal with it, while the other said that the nine concerned Powers should deal with it. But neither dealt with it because they could not agree. But now the approach seems to be a bilateral approach—one Power dealing with it, or two or three. Provided that the bilateral approach does not come in the way of other countries having treaties with independent Japan, there is no harm in a bilateral approach, but if it comes in the way, then it might produce confusion later on.

Q: Do you think there can be a peace treaty with Japan without China?

JN: I do not think there can be any settlement of the Far Eastern problem without China coming into the picture....

6. Bilateral Agreement between United States and Japan¹

...It is clear that a simultaneous bilateral Defence Agreement between the US and Japan will rouse Chinese antagonism. They will naturally and inevitably think that this is meant against them. The whole Far Eastern problem, Korea, Formosa, etc, will then become wider still and include Japan in its scope.

We cannot come in the way of any bilateral arrangement between the US and Japan. But even from the US's point of view, it seems to me to be wiser to keep this bilateral Defence Agreement something apart from the treaty and something that should follow it later. But this, they are not likely to agree to and the UK attaches importance to both being simultaneous.

So far as we are concerned, this will make it still more difficult for us to be co-signatories of any treaty. I do not quite understand the idea of the treaty being "kept in abeyance for the time being". Evidently, it is intended that

1. Note to Secretary-General, MEA and Secretary, Commonwealth Relations, 12 June 1951. JN Collection. Extracts. These views were communicated to the British High Commission.

several countries should sign this treaty. It would have been far better for the treaty to be signed by the USA and possibly by UK and such other countries as agree, and for other countries, such as India, to have their separate treaties with Japan.

We need not say anything about the ship-building capacity of Japan, though I confess I do not appreciate this business of dismantling ship-building yards when the world needs shipping. Nor do I quite understand what Japan's rights are in the Congo Basin.

It is quite clear to me that there is no chance whatever of our being co-signatories of this treaty. All we can do is to have our own treaty with Japan later....

7. The Japanese Peace Treaty¹

I wrote a few lines on your note on the Japanese peace treaty this morning. I have been thinking more about this matter, and I feel that we should be exceedingly careful as to what we do and what we agree to. I have already said that we cannot sign or join in the multilateral treaty.² Even apart from this, there is a danger of our attitude not being clearly understood or being misrepresented.

The test of this treaty is not simply to isolate it from other facts and consider it in vacuum. It is inevitably connected with the situation in the Far East. Therefore, one has to judge it from the point of view of its effect on this situation. Does it tend to peace or war? Does it add to the tension or relieve the present tension?

It seems to me that the present great interest of the US Government in pushing forward this treaty is intimately connected with the Far Eastern situation. Even according to them, this is to be synchronized with, or to be immediately followed by, a defence pact with Japan. We have not seen the terms of this defence pact, but presumably this will ensure the retention of American forces and bases in Japan. In other words, the independence of Japan will be strictly limited and some kind of military occupation will continue.

1. Note to B.N. Chakravarty, Secretary, Commonwealth Relations, 23 June 1951. JN Collection.

2. The Japanese peace treaty was a multilateral treaty signed by all the Allied nations represented with the exception of the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia at San Francisco where the 52-nation conference was convened on 8 September 1951.

Japan would become an entrenched base for fighting on the mainland of Asia, just as Formosa has become.

All this will add to the fears and apprehensions and anger of China and the USSR. They will think that this is preliminary to large-scale war in the Far East.

The present Japanese Government is very much an American creation, and they will, no doubt, fall in with American views in the hope of American aid, etc. Therefore for this Government to agree to a pact or to any other arrangement does not carry us very far.

In effect the basic consideration for any real Japanese peace treaty is that there should be a measure of concurrence of China and the USSR. Even if they do not fully concur, to ignore them is not to seek peace but think in terms of war.

The manner in which Formosa is referred to, ie, Japan renouncing claims only, may be alright. But what is likely to happen is that immediately after the present Japanese Government, under American influence, may recognise Chiang Kai-shek there and thus give a new status to him.

As an independent country Japan can do almost anything it likes. We cannot even stop it from arming to the utmost, although I would deeply regret it. But it would be much more objectionable if under the guise of a defence pact with the US Japan re-armed (probably with American money) and thus so used and exploited for war purposes on a big scale. All this means the development of a military alliance between the US, Japan and Chiang Kai-shek, which can only mean a big conflict in the East.

These are some considerations I want you to keep in mind, in case you have further talks on this subject with anyone. We should not allow ourselves to be dragged into a position which might prove embarrassing later on.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**V. Bilateral Relations****(i) Pakistan**

1. To C.D. Deshmukh¹

New Delhi
May 25, 1951

My dear Deshmukh,

The other day at a Cabinet meeting, you spoke about the talks you were going to have with Ghulam Mohammad.² Among other things, you mentioned that we held about 50 crores on behalf of Pakistan. Further that Pakistan owed us a large sum of money as a part of the debt settlement, and that this would begin to be paid from June 1952 onwards in annual instalments of about 10 crores a year. This process of repayment was going to last 30 or 40 years.

Normally speaking, according to our commitments, we should pay the 50 crores to Pakistan straightaway and gradually realise the sum due to us on the debt settlement in the course of the next 30 years or more.

It was exceedingly unlikely that we would be able to realise the full sum or any part of the debt settlement from Pakistan. In the circumstances, is it right or desirable for us to part with 50 crores cash now, when we are more or less convinced that we would not get our dues from Pakistan later?

I shall not repeat the argument here. I have given a great deal of thought to this matter since then and I confess that the more I think of it, the less I like the prospect of our breaking our pledged word. This kind of thing goes against the grain. But even looking at the strictly practical aspects, I gravely doubt if this will bring any real advantage to us. Pakistan will make a tremendous fuss about it and hold us up before the world as a country which dishonours its solemn agreements. We shall have little to say in answer. This will inevitably affect our trade or other relations that we might have with Pakistan and it will be a continuing and running sore, constantly talked about. It might well affect the political questions between us and Pakistan also. Our reputation in other countries will necessarily suffer and, in a sense, our credit will go down.

So that, quite apart from any moral or such like consideration (and I do not wish to ignore these), it is very doubtful how far we shall profit by any such move.

Of course you have to make this proposal to Ghulam Mohammad, but it seems to me quite certain that he will reject it. The utmost he may possibly agree to is to deduct next year's instalment of the debt settlement, that is about 10 crores. What then are we to do? I feel more and more convinced that if we fail in our attempts to get our proposal accepted, we should not refuse to pay what is due to Pakistan now.

1. C.D. Deshmukh Papers, NMML.

2. He was at this time the Minister of Finance in Pakistan.

I am conveying my thoughts to you because this matter has troubled me. Of course we must consider it in Cabinet whenever you think that the time has come for it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Problem of Pakhtoons¹

...Question: There is a smaller international problem nearer home, Sir. And that is this Pakhtoonistan. Have the Government of India any views on the right of sovereignty claimed by the Pakhtoons?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Government of India has certainly views on the subject but as is usual with the Government of India, it exercises considerable restraint in their expression....

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 11 June 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 51-57, 247-248, 323-325, 394-397, 433-434, 446, 450-452, 462-463, 487-488, 525-526.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

V. Bilateral Relations

(ii) United States of America

1. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

New Delhi
March 8, 1951

Nan dear,

I have just received your letter of the 26th February.²

Today I had the McGhees to lunch and, after lunch, we had an hour's talk.³ There is nothing very special about the talk. McGhee began by saying that the US had no desire to force their viewpoint on us and it was for us to decide. Naturally, they wanted us to support their great moral crusade, and so on and so forth. I tried to explain to him our background, our analysis of the situation, and our conviction that war can never solve this or any other difficulty, and must inevitably bring ruin to the world. Finally he said that what he was desirous of was that we should be in close touch with each other and have consultations, even though we might disagree. I said that I quite appreciated that. He is going away tomorrow morning....

With love from
Jawahar

1. JN Collection. Extracts.
2. Vijayalakshmi Pandit wrote that the news of the trade agreement between India and Pakistan was well received in Washington, while Nehru's statement concerning India's attitude of friendship towards the United States also had a good response.
3. George McGhee, US Assistant Secretary of State, came to Delhi on 6 March 1951.

2. "The Leaders Programme"¹

I certainly think that you might express our regret and surprise at the way the "Leaders Programme" has been utilised. You can say so to the US Embassy here. You might also point out that we are not anxious to send our officers to the US in these circumstances under the Fulbright Foundation.²

I have been getting almost daily request from some one or other of our officers to go abroad under some UN scheme or other. We have to pay part of

1. Note to Foreign Secretary, 23 June 1951. JN Collection.
2. The Fulbright Foundation was named after James William Fulbright, a US Senator who was the author of the Fulbright Act (1946), which provided for the exchange of students and teachers between the United States and other countries.

the expenses which are considerable. I think we should put a stop to this kind of thing. We get a false impression of getting something for nothing. As a matter of fact we lose the officer for several months, pay him his full salary and in addition, pay him something more. The least we can do is to revise our system of payments in this connection. I see no reason why any burden should fall upon us. We can pay the salary as leave salary if leave is due. Otherwise I do not see why we should pay anything more than half the salary. You might try to get a list of the number of people who have gone under some kind of US or UN scholarship and on what terms they have been sent.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

V. Bilateral Relations

(iii) Soviet Union

1. To V.K. Krishna Menon¹

New Delhi
May 16, 1951

My dear Krishna,

I have received your savingram about Russia negotiations.² I have been taking a personal interest in this matter and reports are made to me daily. Telegrams etc, are shown to me before they are sent. These negotiations have been confined thus far to the barter arrangement for wheat.³ On the whole, while the Russians are cooperative, our eagerness is greater than theirs. They send a message to Moscow and await instructions. We telephone to them daily asking if the instructions have come and that we want to go ahead.

There has been no talk in this connection about a trade treaty. Last year and before there was some talk, but it petered out. We are perfectly prepared to discuss a trade treaty with them and we are going to suggest it. But this will necessarily take some time. Meanwhile we have to deal with the food situation immediately.

There has been, as far as we can see from here, a sustained, widespread and virulent attack in England in regard to our Kashmir policy.⁴ That attack is principally against me. American newspapers have criticized us and occasionally even attacked us.⁵ But, on the whole, there is far less malice in this than in some of the British newspapers. I am surprised to see the bitterness of British comment.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML.

2. See *ante*, p. 85.

3. See *ante*, pp. 85-86.

4. The *Sunday Express*, calling Nehru "the muddling mediator", said, "no single man has ever caused such strain inside the Commonwealth." The journal feared his attitude on Kashmir might result in Pakistan leaving the Commonwealth. The *Manchester Guardian* considered Nehru's speeches on Kashmir as a calculated rebuff to the Security Council and said, "These have been reminders of precariousness of the truce in Kashmir."

5. The *New York Times* commented, "He (Nehru) acts as a statesman, politician and diplomat, but he often speaks as a moralist.... In consequence, he has the socialist's undisguised contempt for capitalism... he speaks of the West's cut-throat civilization. His understanding of 20th century American capitalism is negligible.... There is no doubt that Nehru's desire for peace is deep and sincere.... In spite of this Gandhi-like Doctrine, Nehru's Government has fought one successful war (against Hyderabad) and maintains a large army poised for fighting in Kashmir. The key to this contradiction is the fact that Nehru has to govern India, and Gandhi never did."

SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

I have not heard from you at all about the Japanese peace treaty. Meanwhile we had to send something in reply. The instructions we have sent to our Ambassador in Washington have been repeated to you.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

V. Bilateral Relations

(iv) Nepal

1. Dacoities in Nepal¹

The Government of India received information, both from the Nepal Government and the UP Government, that a gang of over 200 persons under Dr K.I. Singh² had committed a large number of dacoities and some murders on the Nepal-Gorakhpur border. A number of individuals, who are Indian nationals living near the border, also complained directly to the Government about the murder of their relatives by this gang and the looting of their property. Government received not only general and vague charges, but also specific information about several murders committed in cold blood and numerous dacoities. Cases of rape of young women were also reported. These murders were apart from people killed in actual fighting. This gang was reported to be well armed with rifles and automatic weapons.

The activities of this gang naturally created great consternation on both sides of the border, and both the Nepal Government and the UP Government were anxious that effective steps should be taken to put an end to these lawless activities. It was proposed that joint action should be taken in this matter by the forces of the Nepal Government and the Government of India. Both Governments agreeing to this action, orders were issued accordingly by both of them, and importance was attached to the speed of the operation as it was feared that if the gang entered the mountainous regions, it would be difficult to take effective action. This joint action was thereupon taken and Dr K.I. Singh's gang was surrounded. They offered opposition and some fighting took place as a result of which seven of the gang were killed and one was wounded. There were some light casualties on the side of the Indian forces. On the 20th February, Dr K.I. Singh and 357 persons belonging to his gang were captured. Large quantities of arms and ammunition and looted property were also captured. Among the people who were captured along with Dr K.I. Singh were several well-known dacoits wanted by the UP authorities for serious crimes.

It is the policy of the Government of India not to interfere with the internal affairs of Nepal. When, however, criminal activities take place on considerable scale on the border, the two Governments have agreed, in the past, to take joint action. Indian forces have strict orders not to enter Nepal territory except in such cases of joint action by agreement. It was at the request of and with the permission of the Nepal authorities that a certain number of police and

1. Statement made in Parliament, 12 March 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol VI, Part I, columns 2163-2164.
2. Nepalese politician; joined Nepali Rashtriya Congress Party, 1946; actively participated in the revolution of 1950; opposed Delhi Pact of February 1951.

soldiers entered Nepal territory from India for the purpose of this joint action. This was entirely confined to the suppression of a criminal gang and had no political significance.

2. Developments in Nepal¹

...Question: What about the developments in Nepal during the last few days?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Broadly speaking, I would say that the Interim Government in Nepal is gradually finding its feet and functioning more and more effectively. It has to face great difficulties because the internal structure of Nepal, political and to some extent economic, was upset by recent happenings. There are quite a number of small groups here and there; I am not talking at the moment of political groups or political opposition, which can of course, so far as I am concerned, not only exist but function, but rather of the criminal type of opposition which has attracted to itself anti-social elements and the like. You will remember that I made a statement yesterday in Parliament about one particular group, the K.I. Singh group.² There are small groups here and there behaving in that way, but the whole situation is improving in Nepal.

Q: Don't you think that Mr Koirala³ and others also belong to the criminal anti-social elements?

JN: I think that is a completely false insinuation. There is a very definite difference between something in the nature of a popular insurrection and dacoity and rape.

Q: Don't you believe that Dr K.I. Singh was a member of the Nepal Congress and appointed Governor of Bhairava by Mr Koirala?

JN: There is no question of my believing. I think he was a member of the Nepal Congress. It was hardly a body very properly organised. It attracted to

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 13 March 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 67-69, 103, 153, 295, 355-356, 361-366, 443-445, 502-505.

2. See the preceding item.

3. M.P. Koirala, President of the Nepali Congress.

itself all sorts of people into its fold. Anyhow, we are only concerned with Dr K.I. Singh—I am only calling him Dr for the sake of identifying him; he does not have any particular qualification for that—we are only concerned with his behaviour, with his group's behaviour which is as bad as anything can be.

Q: Are you aware that communists are very active in the highlands of Nepal? On 8 March they came down to the valley and about 400 of them were shot down by the State forces and 80 rounds of ammunition were taken off each man.

JN: I am afraid I don't know anything about it. You will appreciate that while our interest is intimate, Nepal is an independent country. No doubt we hear about it if anything important is happening there. But they don't report to us every incident that is happening there. I don't quite know what your definition of "communist" is. Is it that a person whom you don't like is a communist?

Q: The definition is one who is preaching against the Ranas.

JN: I would suggest to you that that is not a normal definition of "communist". I have no doubt that there are plenty of people in Nepal who have been and are opposed to the Ranas. There are some people who think that in this settlement the Ranas should have been eliminated completely. Naturally we advised the principal parties concerned—the Ranas on the one side and the Nepal Congress on the other—that it was for the good of the country that there should be this Interim Government followed by a general election for a Constituent Assembly. Well, of course, the majority—whatever the majority party is—will get elected. The only alternative was complete chaos and breakdown and our advice was accepted. But that does not mean that every single individual liked that advice and we know many people may not like it. But as I said, more and more the present Government is being accepted and is functioning as a Government.

Q: If the people don't like the settlement, have they a right to armed insurrection in an independent country?

JN: An insurrection is always treason till it justifies itself.

Q: Has the Nepalese Government asked India's assistance in opening up the country?

JN: In what way?

Q: I mean in opening up the country by laying down roads and other communications.

JN: Not that I am aware of. Of course the opening up process is a continuous one. For instance, regular air services are opening up the country. That is functioning. There has been talk of building roads and no doubt in course of time they will build roads.

Q: Is it a fact that the armed rebels are now unwilling to lay down their arms?

JN: No. A large number of them have laid down arms or will lay down arms when they are completely under the control of either the Nepalese Government or Nepalese Congress. They cannot disappear because that will mean a vacuum there. When the settlement was made the State of Nepal might be divided up into 3 parts. One part still under the control of the then Nepalese Government, one part under the control of the Nepalese Congress Volunteer forces and a third part under the control of neither—where administration was either broken down or local elements were having control. Now so far as the first two parts are concerned, most of them are—you might say—under the control—directly or indirectly—of the present Interim Government. So far as the third part is concerned, where local people have assumed charge because of the breakdown of administration, they are gradually being brought into the fold. Sometimes there is some trouble.

Q: Was it our intention that these rebels should lay down their arms?

JN: Not our intention. That is the appeal of the Nepalese Government that everybody should lay down arms.

Q: Why should the Indian Government give support in this matter?

JN: We have not sent any support. We have only taken agreed action in the border at the request of the Nepalese Government.

Q: Supposing the Nepalese Government is not able to make the rebels lay down their arms and they ask us to help, will they receive our help?

JN: That is a hypothetical question. Our normal orders are that our troops should not go into Nepal under any circumstances, unless on border troubles they are invited by the Nepalese Government. This is not a new thing. This is an old arrangement because criminal gangs used to operate across the border. This is something which has been done in the past too. In regard to political matters, we don't intervene or propose to intervene. What might happen if a very serious situation arises in Nepal in the future, obviously I cannot say now....



WITH KING TRIBHUVAN IN KATHMANDU, NEPAL, 16 JUNE 1951



AT PASHUPATINATH TEMPLE, KATHMANDU, 16 JUNE 1951

3. The Status of Nepal¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: May I say a word, Sir? The House will remember that Nepal is an independent nation, and an independent nation can come to any terms with another independent nation—subject to such interest as we might have. Our concern chiefly came in, and we were consulted, because it is not possible for anyone to go to Nepal unless he crosses India. Therefore we came into the picture. It was a friendly arrangement whereby we agreed to certain passages etc, and we were consulted.² Otherwise these details are none of our making or in which we were concerned.

1. Statement in Parliament, 19 March 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol VI, Part I, column 2344.
2. On 31 July 1950, India and Nepal signed a treaty of peace and friendship and another of trade and commerce. By the first treaty, both countries recognised “complete sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence” of the other and Nepal was free to import from or through Indian territory the arms, ammunition material and equipment necessary for her security. By the second treaty, India gave Nepal full and unrestricted right of commercial transit of goods and manufactures through Indian territory and ports, subject to certain agreed conditions and, to promote trade interests, both countries agreed to facilitate the use of routes and methods of transportation most economical and convenient. The treaty also laid down that civil aircraft of either State could fly over the territory of the other in accordance with normal international procedure.

4. To C.P.N. Singh¹

New Delhi
March 27, 1951

My dear Chandreshwar,²

I have been following reports about conditions in Nepal,³ as I am deeply interested in this matter. As far as I can gather, there is a tendency towards improvement, although most of the difficulties continue. I should like you to keep me in

1. JN Collection.
2. He was Indian Ambassador in Nepal at this time.
3. A series of disturbances instigated by opponents of the Nepalese Government, who rejected the constitutional settlement reached on 18 February 1951, took place in various parts of the country. The Gurkha Dal also launched an agitation demanding Gurkha representation in the Government.

touch with the position there. I am not referring to the occasional telegrams that you send, but rather to a fuller report from time to time by air mail.

You have often told us about the Gurkha Dal. Information has reached us from other sources also about this. This is to the effect that many members of the Rana family are still secretly encouraging the Gurkha Dal,⁴ the purpose being to discredit the new Government and to seize power. Some of the younger Ranas are said to have resigned their position to join the Dal. It is possible that the Army, which has not yet developed any real sense of patriotism or public duty and is composed of Gurkhas, might be the object of the Dal's special solicitude and subversive efforts.

I should like you to send us a report about the position of the Dal and the alleged intrigues that are going on.

I should particularly like to know how the King, the Prime Minister, and the other members of the Cabinet are pulling together. Or are they pulling in different directions? Is there any sense of cooperation in them or does any one of them sulk?

I have received a letter from Shibbanlal Saksena in which he encloses a letter from some member of the Praja Parishad in Kathmandu. I do not attach much importance to news coming from Shibbanlal Saksena or his friends. Nevertheless I thought I might inform you that the allegation is that you and your Embassy are interfering in local politics and trying to crush the Praja Parishad. The Praja Parishad, I take it, is an opposition body, which no doubt wants to create trouble. There is also a hint that some of the popular Ministers are trying to get these members of the Praja Parishad forcibly suppressed or even liquidated. I suppose all this is grossly exaggerated.

You realise of course that India's position in Nepal is a very important and significant one now and because of that your position as India's Ambassador is important and significant. This brings very great responsibilities and care and caution have to be exercised in discharging these responsibilities.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. It was alleged by the Congress spokesman that the propaganda campaign launched by the Gurkha Dal, which was hostile to the Nepali Congress, had been organised by the Rana family as a cover for their plans to regain power. The general secretary of the Gurkha Dal, Bharat Shamsher, was the grandson of General Babar Shamsher, the Defence Minister and brother of the Prime Minister, Maharaja Mohan Shamsher.

5. To C.P.N. Singh¹

New Delhi
April 18, 1951

My dear Chandreshwar,
Your letter of April 17th.

It seems to me that the advice you had been giving is correct. I am quite sure that if Koirala and his colleagues go too far ahead, the situation will react against them.² If they set up a strong dictatorial Government, they will gradually become unpopular. The course of wisdom is not to break up the idea of a coalition but in effect to have more power. It is far safer not to drive out the Maharaja than to declare open war against him and his clan.

The King obviously can play an important part in this set-up. He has to be advised accordingly.

I have already informed you that the Maharaja can come here to see me.³ I think that Koirala should also come. I am suggesting no date as this should depend on the situation in Kathmandu.

I have just received your telegram about the Maharaja's request for joint action in Jhandanagar. It is curious that you mention the Maharaja only in this connection and not Koirala. Anyhow we shall take the necessary action.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.
2. Koirala said in Gorakhpur on 16 April 1951 that the Nepali Congress would not adopt a policy of appeasement in dealing with the Gurkha Dal or the Nepali National Congress or "any other reactionary organisation."
3. Mohan Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana, Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister of Nepal, left for Delhi on 10 May 1951 to apprise the Government of India of "unsatisfactory" state of affairs within the Government of Nepal and its repercussions outside the State.

6. The Situation in Nepal¹

...Question: What about the situation in Nepal?²

Jawaharlal Nehru: This morning papers mentioned about internal changes in

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 11 June 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 51-57, 247-248, 323-325, 394-397, 433-434, 446, 450-452, 462-463, 470, 525-526.
2. Following the resignation of the Government on 10 June 1951, a new interim cabinet under Maharaja Mohan Shamsher was sworn in on the same day. The Cabinet parity between the Ministers of Cabinet drawn from the Rana family and those drawn from the Nepali Congress was undisturbed by the reorganization.

the Cabinet. It is entirely a Nepalese affair. What do you expect me to say about it? Next week I am going on a three days' visit to Kathmandu. It has nothing to do with any changes in the Cabinet or the political set-up. It is a courtesy visit which I promised to make when the King was here on the last occasion.

Q: What is the difference between now and earlier in the working of the Nepalese Government?

JN: Nepal is going through a very rapid process of transition.³ They are sometimes normal and healthy and sometimes unhealthy. They are bound to happen and continue. You cannot just explain it as a kind of conflict between the Governments or two groups. It is something bigger than that. Some constant adjustment is being made to these varying state of affairs. It does not mean that by some adjustment some static condition is produced. But taking an overall view of the situation these adjustments lead to certain normality and certain concentration on the development of security and administrative efficiency and the rest.

Q: When you are in Nepal if they ask you what your views are about signing a treaty with China, what will you advise? What is the feeling there today in Nepal....

JN: I know nothing about it. I did see something about it in the Press. It will be for them to decide. The question does not arise. Nobody has referred it to us.

Q: The Nepalese Convention has passed a resolution asking for a treaty with China.⁴ What is your reaction?

JN: No question of any reaction. A friendly treaty is always good.

Q: About Nepal, Sir, you said, Nepal had never independent diplomatic relations except through India and the British Government in India. Will that relationship continue or change, Sir?

JN: I cannot say pending developments. It is not a question of relationship but the fact is that by the nature of things, geographical and the rest, India's relationship is far more intimate and important to Nepal than that of any other country. If any other country's relationship is in conflict with India's, naturally we will not like it....

3. In 1951, the Premier of Nepal resigned and the King assumed direct control, thus ending the traditional rule of the Rana family, the hereditary dynasty of the Premiers.
4. In fact, the Working Committee of the Nepali Congress.

7. India's Assistance without Interference¹

Nepal must remain independent because her independence is essential to her, and for the world's well-being.

The impression that India wants to interfere in Nepal's internal affairs is totally wrong. In the light of the world's changing situation it is all the more necessary that Nepal should be free from all foreign influence and maintain her tradition as an old independent country.

It has been agreed to by political groups in Nepal that the country is to be a full-fledged democratic State. India has no intention of interfering into Nepal's affairs. Whatever advice I can tender you is as a friend and not as India's Prime Minister. The governance of your country is essentially your and your leaders' responsibility. If you seek our help in, say, technical or other spheres, we will do our utmost to be useful to you but we never want to interfere.

From my experience of India and the world I can say that what makes a nation strong and sets her on the way to prosperity is primarily constructive efforts by its people and Government. No amount of good and capable leaders and administrators can make the desired headway if people do not actively cooperate.

The maintenance of peace is a prerequisite for progress. It is worth bearing in mind that a course between inflexibility which does not take note of changing times and drastic changes which at times lead to dissipation of energies in internecine strife is to be clearly steered.

1. Speech at a public meeting, Kathmandu, 16 June 1951. From the *National Herald*, 17 June 1951.

8. India and Nepal¹

Mountain-girt Nepal, daughter of the Himalayas, young sister of India, I have come here at last. I came here with the greetings of my people and to fulfil a long-cherished wish of mine. During this brief visit of three days, the people of Nepal have overwhelmed me with their kindness and affection and made

1. Farewell message before leaving Kathmandu, 18 June 1951. PMS.

me feel that I was no stranger to them, but a friend and a comrade. I am deeply grateful to everyone here for friendliness and hospitality. In particular, I should like to express my deep gratitude to His Majesty the King, His Highness the Prime Minister, and other Ministers of the Government.

I am a child of the mountains myself, the mountains of the far north, and the sight of them, and the breath of fresh air that blows across them, fills me with exhilaration. My mother country, India, is the offspring of the mountains and the sea that surround her, and she has inherited something of their immemorial character. The Himalayas are the guardians and sentinels of India and Nepal and their white-capped peaks welcome friends and are a warning to those of hostile intent. With these common and perpetual guardians, the fate of India and Nepal is linked closely together. Both of us must preserve this precious heritage which guards our freedom. In the precarious world of today, where nations prepare and think of war, it is particularly necessary that we hold together and preserve the liberties that we have gained. The men of Nepal have gained fame in many a battle-field in other parts of the world. Neither India nor Nepal wants to wage war or go with hostile intent to any country, but we are both determined not to permit anyone to interfere with our liberties.

What has happened in Nepal during the last few months is something without parallel and unique in history.² Great changes have taken place and the country marches rapidly towards progress and democracy. Like every other country Nepal is full of problems, but the way she has already dealt with some of these great problems gives promise that she will succeed in the future also. What is remarkable in Nepal is the manner in which hostile and warring groups have adapted themselves to these changes and are cooperating with each other today. That shows a spirit of understanding and a measure of wisdom which are truly remarkable. But for this spirit of accommodation and cooperation, Nepal might well have suffered grievous conflict bringing chaotic conditions in its train and postponing any effective reform for a number of years. But both those who represented the new order and those who represented the old order thought more of the larger issues and the good of the country and the people than of their own particular advantage. Out of this understanding grew the unity and cooperation, which we see now. I must congratulate all those concerned, and I must congratulate also the King who has played such a wise and important role during recent months.

2. Negotiations between King Tribhuvan, his Government and the Nepali Congress on 12 February 1951 resulted in the issue of a Proclamation on 18 February 1951 announcing the drafting of a democratic Constitution by an elected Constituent Assembly. After a meeting with Nehru on 16 May the Ranas and the Congress agreed to cooperate for "the political development and economic prosperity of Nepal." The Government resigned on 10 June and a new interim Cabinet under Mohan Shamsher was sworn in.

The people of Nepal have embarked on a great adventure. They have the whole-hearted goodwill of the people of India in this brave adventure. I earnestly hope that the spirit of cooperative working will continue, that the freedom of Nepal will be built on the strong foundation of unity of effort and constructive endeavour, that as freedom grows and rights are acknowledged and given effect to, duties and responsibilities, which always accompany rights, will also be acknowledged.

I thank the people of Nepal again and wish them well. I trust also that the silken bonds that hold Nepal and India together will grow stronger, to the mutual advantage of the two countries and their peoples.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

VI. Foreign Settlements in India

1. Portuguese Overseas Provinces¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: Yes.² Our attention has been drawn to the proposed legislation in Portugal. The main features of the proposed amendments to the existing Colonial Act³ are changes in the various names and designations.⁴ The Portuguese "Colonial Empire" is to be called "Overseas Empire". The word "Colony" will be replaced by "Overseas Province". It is also proposed to give a measure of local autonomy to colonial territories but a large measure of control and supervision will continue to remain with the Portuguese Government. These proposed changes, though no doubt intended to produce an impression of change in effect, make no difference.

The House will be interested to know what the Portuguese Government consider the justification for their presence in Goa. Article 2 of the Colonial Act reads as follows:-

It is part of the essential objects of the Portuguese nation to fulfil its historical mission of possessing and colonising overseas dominions and of civilising the native population inhabiting them, as well as to influence them by its culture, a function ascribed to it by the Eastern Padroado.

It is proposed to change this Article 2 now as follows:-

It is of the organic essence of the Portuguese nation to fulfil the historical function of colonising the discovered lands under its sovereignty and to import to and to propagate among the populations of those lands the benefits of civilisation, simultaneously with the exercise of the moral influence deriving from the patronage of the East.

I think it may be said that the people of Goa have had sufficient experience now of the benefits of civilisation and the moral influence of the patronage of Portugal of the East. It is not surprising that they wish a change now. In any

1. Statement made in Parliament, 12 March 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol VI, Part I, columns 2175-2176.
2. Nehru was asked whether the Government of India had taken note of a report that the Portuguese Government was enacting a law converting the overseas colonies including territories in India into "Overseas Provinces".
3. By the Colonial Act promulgated in May 1930 in Goa, all Portuguese overseas possessions came under the direct control of the Government in Lisbon.
4. On 11 June 1951, Portugal amended the Constitution replacing the word "colonia" by "Provincia Ultramarina."

event, it is of the organic essence of the Indian nation and of the historic process that brought independence to India, to free those parts of India which are still under colonial rule.⁵ Verbal changes and enactments make no difference to these essential facts and the Government of India will adhere to the policy which has been so frequently reiterated.

5. France and Portugal were the only European Powers with territorial interests in India after 1947.

2. Teaching of Indian Languages in Colonial Territories¹

I think that we have to take some step forward, however small it might be, in the teaching of Indian languages in these colonial territories, where large numbers of Indians live. That step will have to be a cautious one and can only be taken after consultation with the Indians there and the Government.

The languages we have to deal with are Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Tamil, etc. Quite a large number of Indians abroad probably have as their mother-tongue either Tamil or Gujarati. Many Muslims in East Africa speak and write Gujarati, although latterly they have been slightly turning towards Urdu. Nevertheless their principal language is Gujarati. I remember a large Muslim delegation coming to me somewhere in Somaliland. They were all Gujarati-speaking and could hardly understand simple Hindi or Urdu, except for one or two of them.

I think we might leave Gujarati and Tamil to the local efforts of people speaking those languages. If, however, they themselves want either of these languages taught in the schools and their numbers are adequate, our representative should not come in the way, but even encourage this.

This should apply to Urdu also. That is to say if a sufficient number want Urdu introduced, our representative should not come in the way but encourage it.

In the main, however, stress should be laid on Hindi, that is provided an adequate number desire it. Hindi means Devanagiri script and simple language which is a mixture of Hindi and Urdu and which is usually called Hindustani. Romanised script cannot be encouraged because, in existing circumstances, this will not be useful at all.

1. Note to Deputy Minister, MEA, 25 June 1951. JN Collection.

There can be no doubt that within a few years Hindi including Devanagri script will be widely used for official and non-official purposes in India. If so, then Hindi becomes an essential subject of knowledge for anyone who wishes to function in India or even on behalf of India. Therefore, stress generally should be laid on Hindi teaching. But this should be voluntary and there should be no compulsion.

English undoubtedly will be taught in the schools and should be learnt. To say that a child might be burdened with too many languages is true, but there is nothing very unusual about this. In Madras today children have to learn English and Hindi, apart from their own language. In many European countries they have to learn at least two or three languages, if not more.

8

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

VII. General

1. To Baldev Singh¹

New Delhi
March 1, 1951

My dear Baldev Singh,

Your letter of the 1st March about the runway in Car Nicobar Island.²

The matter is not quite so simple as it appears on the surface. We allowed the RAF to use that island for their normal communication purposes. Why should the runway be lengthened? The only reason can be that it should be made a base for big bombers etc, which might operate in South-East Asia and beyond. In other words, it means a creation of a base for a future major war. Having regard to our general policy, this would definitely come in our way and we would be accused of allowing Indian territory to be used as a base by a foreign power. To say that this costs us nothing does not get us over the difficulty. To say also that we can take over the island when we want, is also not feasible. If we permit the UK Government to spend a considerable sum of money there for a particular purpose, then, it would be most unfair for us to deny them the use of that island when they need it for that very purpose.

I would have no objection to repairs being undertaken to keep the runway in proper condition. But the proposal was something much more than that.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No 14-36/57-UKAF-MEA.
2. Baldev Singh, the Minister of Defence, wrote that while the Cabinet at its meeting of 23 December 1950 had decided not to permit the RAF to lengthen and repair the runway in Car Nicobar Islands, he personally could see no objection in the matter because, in his view, India then would reap the benefit of those improvements when she decided to take over the place.

2. Cable to H.S. Malik¹

Your telegram No 41. We should like you, in an informal and friendly way, to represent to Schuman² our concern over the situation in Morocco³ and our

1. 9 March 1951. JN Collection. Malik was Indian Ambassador to France at this time.
2. Robert Schuman was the Minister of Foreign Affairs in France at this time.
3. Between November 1950 and February 1951, the struggle for freedom in French Morocco intensified. The Moroccan Government took action on 1 March 1951 against five members of the executive of Istiqlal, the nationalist party, disowned on 26 February 1951 by the Sultan after settlement of his differences with the French.

earnest hope that in the interests of world peace, the French Government would see their way to reaching a friendly settlement in Morocco. Our demarché is made in no hostile spirit but only with a view to ensuring that, with the world already in high tension, something that is likely to heighten that tension should be avoided. Nationalism and the desire for freedom have become tremendous forces, especially among Eastern peoples, and transcend geographical, racial and cultural frontiers. This is manifest from the deep interest that Asian countries have displayed in every movement for national freedom, whether in Indonesia or Tripoli⁴ or elsewhere. The Indian National Congress developed some friendly contacts with the Istiqlal movement of Morocco as long ago as 1927. Events in Morocco now evoke in India an appeal and sympathetic response for the people's urge to freedom. This is reflected in the Press here and in questions put in Parliament. France, with her ideals which the French Revolution bequeathed to the modern world, should understand and appreciate this urge of freedom in other countries and the sympathetic response that this evokes among millions of people. We earnestly hope therefore that French statesmanship will deal with the present problem in Morocco with sympathy and understanding and with a view to cooperation with the popular elements who seek freedom for their country. During the last war, assurances were freely given that such freedom would come after victory and it is natural for the people concerned to expect a fulfilment of these promises.

4. In 1911, Tripoli had passed under the control of Italy, and later was made the capital of the Italian colony of Libya. During World War II, the city was captured by the British.

3. Use of the Atom Bomb¹

...Question: There was an unconfirmed report in one of the papers from Washington this morning that General Eisenhower had declared that he would use the atom bomb instantly in the event of an outbreak of war in Europe.² Can you offer your advice in the matter?

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 13 March 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 67-69, 103, 153, 295, 355-356, 361-366, 443-445, 482-484, 503-505.
2. The United Press of America reported from Washington on 11 March 1951 that Eisenhower had testified before the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees that he would use the atomic bomb "instantly" if war came and if he was convinced it would bring sufficient destruction to the enemy.

Jawaharlal Nehru: I remember expressing myself about the atom bomb in one of these press conferences here. Although I am in charge of scientific research here, my knowledge of scientific development is naturally a layman's knowledge. Nevertheless such knowledge as I possess leads me—that is on the basis of expert opinion—to say that if once the atom bomb was used in a big way by all the parties concerned who can use them, opinions differ—some people say that apart from the actual direct damage done, radio-active waves, to a greater or lesser degree, would affect every human being if it is used in a big way. That is to say, the 2000 or 2200 million human beings in the world will all be affected in a greater or lesser degree, apart from plant life being affected all over the world. That is an extreme view. The moderate view is that a billion people only will be affected—ie, a billion meaning a thousand millions. You can take your choice of the various views concerned. If that is the effect of atomic warfare, exactly what are our aims by indulging in atomic war? What is our objective? After all war is our fault. Wars are not fought for the sake of war. I hope they are not fought for the sake of destroying. They are fought to remove an obstruction in the way of gaining our objectives. Now I cannot for the moment think of any objectives which would not be swept away by a thousand million people being destroyed and disabled, apart from other damages done. In other words, tremendous physical collapse of the world and what is no doubt worse, even collapse of humanity will happen. Now any step taken of that type seems to me cannot lead to a satisfactory result or realization of any objective that we may have—whatever it may be....

4. Nationalist Movements in North Africa¹

...Question: What is your reaction to recent events in North Africa—Morocco?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It may interest you to know that so far as I am personally concerned I came in contact with the Istiqlal Party.² (Interruption: What party

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 13 March 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 67–69, 103, 153, 295, 355–356, 361–366, 443–445, 482–484, 502–503.
2. The Istiqlal (Independence) Party was the party of the Moroccan nationalist movement of the 1930s. The Party led Morocco to independence in 1956.

is that?) It is astonishing that experienced newspapermen should ask me that question. That is the national party of Morocco, the old one. I have been in contact with it for over 24 years—since 1927. And through me the Indian National Congress came into some kind of contact with it, as we had come in contact with the Wafd Party.³

So naturally we have been interested in the growth of the nationalist movements in Morocco, in Tunis; we have been in contact with them for the past twenty three or twenty four years. We do not naturally seek to interfere with these movements, nor do we have any precise knowledge of developments there from time to time but because they represent the nationalist urge for freedom in those countries, they looked to us and got into touch with the Indian National Congress in the past and we are in some touch with them. As I said, our contacts have been old, not new. During war time, as elsewhere, numerous promises were made about the freedom of these North African territories. So far as I remember, President Roösevelt, during one of his visits to Morocco, rather expressly stated something to that effect.⁴ Recently it appears that some conflict has arisen between the French Government representatives there and the nationalist party.⁵ The Sultan of Morocco declared himself, some two or three years back, in favour of the nationalist party, which was a surprising development.⁶ Now, as I said, there is pressure and conflict which, I think, is very unfortunate and I hope that some settlement will be arrived at there between the French Government and the nationalist and progressive elements, promising the latter freedom. I do not think it is conceivable or feasible for the situation in Morocco or elsewhere in North Africa to be handled by denying the people there their independence or freedom for too long. So it is to the interests of all parties concerned to treat it wisely and with a view to redeeming the promises made during the War.

Q: While some of these parties are seeking our support in their national struggle they are also adopting a rather violent attitude towards India in regard to Kashmir. Should we not revise our policy and cease giving them help?

3. The leading nationalist party of Egypt.

4. In January 1943, shortly after the Anglo-American landings in Morocco, President Roosevelt met privately the Sultan in Casablanca and assured him of American help for securing Morocco's freedom. Similarly, hopes for independence arose in Tunisia when the British and the United States forces captured the cities of Tunis and Bizerte in May 1943 and Bourguiba, the nationalist leader of Tunisia, began a series of unsuccessful appeals for Tunisian independence.

5. See *ante*, pp. 501-502.

6. Sultan Sidi Mohammad ben Youssef (1910-1961); supported the Istiqlal's call for independence in 1947.

JN: We do not want to revise the principles for which we stand because somebody else holds other principles. We chose those principles because they were good and right, not as a reaction to somebody else's activities. We hold on to those principles which we consider essential in terms of world peace, world freedom, etc. One of those principles is the ending of colonial domination. We feel that is one pregnant cause of trouble. The other principle is the ending of racial inequality. So we must stick to those principles on which our whole freedom movement and Constitution were based. You talked about help. We do not wish to interfere partly because we cannot. Therefore we do not shout too much about it. We are not shouting and making declarations about it, but we do, where possible, offer our advice or suggestions whether they be accepted or not accepted. We feel that when we are in touch with friendly people, we should tell them how we feel about it. About countries or parties adopting a violent attitude in regard to Kashmir, presumably you are referring to the recent conference in Karachi, the Motamer Conference.⁷ You are perfectly right in saying that some of the speeches delivered there were exceedingly violent and, if I may say so, foolish. Perhaps you got a wrong idea of what took place there by reading certain reports that appeared in the Pakistan Press. There were other types of speeches delivered there which were not given publicity in the Press there. There was opposition to the whole subject being taken up there by some countries and delegates, which was also suppressed in the Press. Finally, the people who came there represented particular groups in their own country, not their whole country by any means....

7. The Second Annual World Islamic Conference at Karachi in February 1951 passed a series of political resolutions supporting Pakistan's claims to Kashmir, with militant speeches by some of the delegates, one of them exclaiming "sword in hand we shall meet...."

5. The Tunisian Freedom Movement¹

I shall gladly meet Mr Habib Bourguiba² and Mr Taieb Slim³ at a convenient time.

1. Note to Foreign Secretary, 18 March 1951. JN Collection.
2. Habib Ben Ali Bourguiba (b. 1903); Tunisian politician; member, Destour Party, 1921, and as a founder of Neo-Destour Party in 1934 fought for Tunisia's independence till 1955; President of Tunisia, 1957-87.
3. Taieb Slim (b. 1919); Tunisian politician and diplomat; Head of the Council of Ministers, 1955-56; Ambassador to Britain, 1956-62; Permanent Representative to UN, 1962-67, 1973-74, and 1981-84.

While we fully sympathise with the Tunisian movement for freedom,⁴ it may not be advisable for us to sponsor any particular resolution before the United Nations. We are ourselves entangled there in the Kashmir and other issues and it may not be to the advantage of Tunisia for us to be the principal sponsors. However, this would depend on developments. In any event, we would give it as much diplomatic support as possible.

As for financial support for providing a centre of information, this again would be a little difficult and embarrassing, in view of our relations with the French Government. In order to pull our full weight in these matters we should keep clear of these entanglements which might be used against us. We have our own troubles with the French Government in regard to the French possessions in India.

4. After the Second World War nationalist agitation for ending the French protectorate was intensified, with the Destour (constitutional) and Neo-Destour (radical) parties in the lead. In 1950 France granted Tunisia a large degree of autonomy, but the Neo-Destour Party, led by Habib Bourguiba, continued its agitation.

6. Foreign Policy¹

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am grateful to you, Sir, for this opportunity given to me to intervene in this debate at this stage to say some things on behalf of Government. Those honourable Members who have already spoken have been so exceedingly kind and gentle in regard to our foreign policy² that there is really very little that I need say in defence of it. Something has been said about various matters—some relatively secondary and some smaller matters—connected with it. The main thing is after all the objectives and trends of our foreign policy and as far as I have been able to make out there is a very great deal of agreement in this House in regard to those objectives and trends. So, I must express my gratitude to this House for its kind reception of this subject.

It is not an easy matter for me, or anyone else, to speak about a subject which is as broad as the world and which involves so many varied and difficult

1. Statement in Parliament, 28 March 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol IX, Part II, columns 5288-5304.
2. Several members congratulated Nehru for an unbroken series of right decisions taken by the Government in the international sphere during 1950.

problems. I confess that although I have given a great deal of attention for a large number of years to these matters and am constantly in touch with developments in the world, I have not grasped this sorry scheme of things entirely. I try to do so as much as I can and take counsel with my colleagues and advisers, but in the nature of things the world and the foreign policy that goes with it become more and more complicated.

An honourable Member, speaking this morning, quoted a dictum of Bismarck and laid down that we should consider our frontiers to be somewhere in East Africa, Malaya, Burma and various other distant places.³ Now, that observation of his and his quotation from Bismarck for a moment transported me to some other century. And I am sure that my honourable friend who said this himself mostly spends his time in some other century. If he were to refer to Bismarck and his dicta in this connection, he will find that not only is Bismarck long dead, but his policies are "deader" than Bismarck. And if any person or any country seeks to follow that policy, he is bound to fail. If we think in terms of our frontiers thousands of miles away from India, then others will think of their frontiers in India—it is obvious—and immediately clashes are bound to arise. The fact of the matter is that this nineteenth century outlook of the world, which the honourable Member represents in this House, is an outlook of a few European Powers, a few European imperialist expansionist powers who were trying to spread out all over the world—in Africa, in Asia, etc—sometimes coming into conflict in these distant continents, sometimes overlapping, sometimes coming to war with each other, trying to grasp the world and dividing it amongst themselves. There is no part of the world left now for any imperialist power to divide or to seize hold of. They may, of course, try to do so and may even for a moment take possession of some territory here and there. There is no doubt also that there are still very strong expansionist powers, whatever their other policy may be. So that, let us forget the nineteenth century and even the early part of the twentieth century and think of this rather critical, rather tragic, moment of the middle of the twentieth century that we live in. Let us also not imagine that foreign policy is now a kind of game of chess played by superior statesmen sitting in their chancelleries. It is much more complicated and it is a thing involving the passions of hundreds of millions of people, involving economic urges brought about by a variety of factors, involving the consequences of the tremendous technological developments that have taken place, involving war on a scale which is wholly unimaginable even to us here, today, though we read about it. So it is not a

3. Quoting Bismarck that in order that a person may be master in his own house he must be able to sweep the door-steps, R.U. Singh said that India's defence frontiers be extended to the Himalayan countries in the North, the Middle-East, Pakistan and Afghanistan and East Africa on the West and Burma, Malaya and Indonesia on the East, including the Indian Ocean.

question as in the old days of siding with a completely different thing. It is one power against another and trying to get something out of it, gambling for some possession and advantage and so on and so forth. Therefore, it is not an easy matter to deal with this position except by trying to understand some basic causes underlying it, except by having some kind of objective for which one strives, except by having some kind of yardstick by which one can measure one's own activities or policies.

Normally, when people talk about alignment and the like, it is, to say the least of it, a tremendous over-simplification of the issues. One can understand alignment in times of war—everyone is forced to do that: one sides with one power in a war. But I confess that I have completely failed to understand why this war-time psychology should be imported in times of relative peace and people should try to compel this country or that to line up with this group or that. I am not concerned for a moment with the policies of this group or that. But my simple policy—and it is not a negative policy, it is not a passive policy—is first of all, as far as possible, doing our utmost for the avoidance of world war, or any war; secondly, of judging issues on the merits and acting accordingly.

What does this word "alignment" mean? It simply means doing something which you think is not right, but because some others think it is right for you to do it. It means nothing else. It means that on the merits you may have one opinion, but because you are tied up to somebody else you have to surrender your opinion, you have to give up the policy you would normally pursue, because somebody else wants you to pursue some other policy. That is what alignment means. I do not think from our own point of view that would be a right policy to adopt, more especially with all our background, not of today, but of a quarter of a century's background. It would be completely wrong and we would fall between two stools. We will neither follow the policy based upon our inherent past ideals and our present needs, nor can we easily fit in with the new policy. Therefore, our present policy is an automatic and normal development of what we have thought and said and it so happens that it is of some help towards the maintenance of peace, or the avoidance of war.

I am not a prophet and I cannot say what troubles the future will bring in, because we seem today, looking at the world picture, to be continually talking and discussing navigation when the ship happens to be going down.

Now I shall refer first of all to some of the subjects mentioned in the course of the debate. They are rather minor ones and I would prefer not to deal with minor subjects. My colleague the Deputy Minister⁴ will deal with some of these matters. But one or two points I would like to refer to.

4. B.V. Keskar.

There was a reference, repeated reference, to external publicity.⁵ Now I am completely free to confess that I am not satisfied with our external publicity. I am not satisfied with it for a variety of reasons, among them being, first of all that it is inadequate because of financial and such like reasons and secondly, taking it all in all, the personnel is not quite so trained or satisfactory as we would want to have it. Honourable Members who referred to this said two things which are slightly self-contradictory. On the one side they said that they want persons in charge of our external publicity to be experts in India's background history, culture, etc. I agree. We certainly would like to have those persons. They also said that they should be trained journalists. Now, normally these two qualities are not to be found in one person. In addition to that, of course, there are obviously some other qualities required, not only general qualities but special and specific qualities relating to the particular country they may serve in. A person may be a great success, say, in the United States of America and may be a complete failure, say, in China or in some European country. It is a very difficult thing—just as in the choice of diplomatic personnel—the choice of our officers engaged in external publicity. But apart from this I should like the House to consider that external publicity can be done in a way as the United States of America or the United Kingdom, that is great countries with great resources indulge in. The amount of money they spend on it is enormous and completely beyond our resources. Personally even if I had that money I would not spend it that way. I would much rather use that money for our own development in the country than spend such vast sums in the way such sums are spent by some of the big countries. If you do not spend those sums you have to function in a different way. You cannot compete with them in this way, and we do not want to compete with them. Our ways are different. Our background is different. The fact of the matter is that external publicity can be helped or can be hindered by the capacity or lack of capacity of your representatives, but ultimately it is governed much more by what happens in your country and not what we say about it there. It is governed by your general policy.

And what is the test of external publicity or, in fact, of a foreign policy? The ultimate test is whether your country rises, generally speaking, in status in the councils of the world or in international affairs. That is the general test, apart from any particular subject that may come up. Today, if I may venture to say so, India may be heavily criticized—and India is criticized, because of her general policy, by those countries who do not approve of that policy—nevertheless, at no time previously was the importance and status of India greater than today. I do not wish to exaggerate this point and it may

5. S.N. Mishra, a prominent Congressman from Bihar, and S.P. Mookerjee thought India's external publicity was inadequate.

have no great relevance because ultimately it is what we are here in India that counts, not any right or wrong reputation that we may have elsewhere. But the fact remains that progressively our status in world affairs has gone up, our voice counts—whether it is liked or disliked. And it makes a difference, not because our external publicity is good or bad, but because of other factors. In regard to certain other matters where public opinion in the world or in some countries may be against us, or may appear to be against us, that is governed far more by extraneous considerations than by what our representatives may or may not do. I think you expect too much from our representatives abroad if you think that he can influence a whole country by some, shall we say, pamphlets, sheets or talks that he may give. He can only emphasize what our general policy is, bring it to the notice of other countries. He cannot convince them if they do not want to be convinced. He has to function within the orbit of our general policy. If that general policy for some reason or other is not approved of by the other Government or by public opinion in the other country, then it is not his fault. The responsibility is with us. Unfortunately today there is a great deal of adverse criticism in some countries against our policy and sometimes that criticism takes rather a personal shape too. Well, I do not think we should, much as we regret it, pay too much attention to this, or at any rate we should not either allow our minds to be filled with resentment against such criticism or allow it to deflect us from any policy which we consider right.

About foreign possessions in India some honourable Members wanted us to issue some kind of an ultimatum.⁶ It is extraordinary how far some honourable Members go on what they call a strong line. They want us to issue an ultimatum to the United Nations Security Council, to the various countries, to various possessions in India, to anybody who according to them does not function in the way they think he, or it, ought to function. That is not the right way. Apart from that it is not a very realistic way of looking at things. One does not go about, in this complicated world, issuing ultimatums, unless one follows the Bismarckian policy that the honourable Member referred to, and has the strength of Bismarck behind and has the corresponding weakness on the other side. So that, our policy in regard to the foreign possessions has been this. First of all, it is perfectly clear that India cannot tolerate any footholds of foreign Powers in this country. Further, that insofar as those people are concerned we want to get them an opportunity to live their own life, to have autonomy, to decide their own internal fate, if I may say so, because they have also a background of two, three or four hundred years of history of a certain varied type of culture. We do not wish to interfere with it.

6. S.N. Mishra wanted both France and Portugal to be asked to cede their territories by a certain date.

That is not our Government's policy even though some individuals might talk about it. That being decided, how are we to bring this about? Obviously, there are only two ways of bringing this about, either by war or by diplomatic means. So far as war is concerned we do not wish to have war and we rule out war for anybody unless we are forced into it by another party. That is for the House and for the country to decide. If they want to go in for war on any pretext, we do not—whatever country it may be. But the world being what it is we have to be prepared for war and we keep an army and navy as efficiently as possible. So that, the only alternative left to us is diplomatic methods, and we pursue them. Remember also the present state of the world. Progressively it becomes more and more of a powder magazine and it is dangerous anywhere, whether it is outside India or in any part of India—or if I may casually say, in Kashmir—for any step to be taken which apart from affecting that immediate question is dangerous for peace elsewhere too. So one has to go slow, much as we dislike it in regard to these foreign possessions. And it may be that in the ultimate analysis that relatively slow progress now may be the swiftest in the end. Otherwise, if one gets entangled it may take much longer.

I do not wish to say much about the major questions in the world whether in the Far East, in Korea, or in Europe. The House knows that Foreign Ministers of certain important countries are meeting in Europe and proceeding very slowly in coming to an agreement even in regard to the subjects for discussion.⁷ So long as people discuss these matters round the conference table, there is always hope of some solution being found. It may not be a final solution but at any rate it will avert war. Our object today has been for the same method to be employed in the Far East, that is the Powers concerned to come round a conference table. At one time, it almost seemed as if this could take place, but unfortunately it did not and events took a different turn and the United Nations passed a resolution which for the moment came in the way of some kind of negotiated settlement. Since then, war has proceeded in Korea and whatever the result of that war may be, I suppose Korea and the people of Korea will largely vanish away and fade. I suppose Korea will remain, but it is a sad commentary in our present-day politics that whether a country goes to enslave another country or whether it goes to liberate it, the consequences on that unhappy country are exactly the same and that is death and misery by the million. The situation in Korea from the United Nations' point of view has improved somewhat in the last few months. There have been no major military actions for some months, but there has been some slight improvement. I rather doubt if that has made any great difference in the situation.

7. On 28 March 1951, the Deputy Ministers were meeting to work out an agenda for a Foreign Ministers' Conference.

Another curious feature of the situation has been brought to our notice again forcibly in recent days. The United Nations was meant to be and was organized as an institution for the preservation of peace. The United Nations today are engaged in meeting aggression by armed force. The United Nations has no armies really to carry on wars; it has to rely on others. A new development is taking place, a rather remarkable one that military commanders in the field make statements about political policies. It is a very extraordinary development which is fraught with grave consequences for all the countries concerned. The course of development during the last few hundred years among all countries, whatever they may be, whether they are democratic or non-democratic, has been for the civil Government of the day to lay down policies and for the armies in the field and the commanders to carry it out. In determining that policy, no doubt the commander is consulted, his views are taken on the military situation, but policies are laid down by Governments and not by commanders in the field. Certainly no commander in the field, so far as India is concerned, is going to have any voice in laying down any policy at any time. It is the Government of India that will do it. But this strange thing is happening in the Far East, that policy-making statements of great significance are issued sometimes by the commander in the field; who in his profession has a very great reputation; he is a great general, but whose incursions in politics may not be so happy. On the whole, if I may express my opinion, rather guardedly, I would say that the last two or three months, to put it negatively, have not brought war nearer. On the whole the tension or the prospect of world war has rather receded; it has by no means disappeared, but it has receded somewhat and that is some gain, provided we can take advantage of that gain, provided we do not get used to it. If we carry on in this way and perhaps if we have to meet some grave crisis, some eruption suddenly, we cannot overcome it.

One thing which is not related to this is—it just occurred to my mind because what was mentioned was about India House, our High Commissioner in London. One honourable Member⁸ said that he had learnt that India House did not submit any accounts or papers, etc here and was a kind of *imperium in imperio*. I was very greatly surprised to learn this because it was complete news to me but in order not to make any mistake, I referred the matter to my Ministry and asked what the position was, and as I knew, I was told that this statement of the honourable Member was very, very far from correct. I will read out the note I got from my Ministry about this matter.

Not only all the High Commissioner's Office figures are audited by the Auditor of the Home Accounts in London, but the final consolidated figures

8. S.N. Mishra.

of expenditure are sent by the Auditor to the Accountant-General, Commonwealth Relations Office, here for incorporation in the Central Government accounts. The High Commissioner sends us full details of his budget estimates. These are scrutinised and approved by the Ministry. This second procedure has been in force since last year.

There is no question of the accounts or any part of the accounts not being scrutinised etc.

My honourable friend, Dr Mookerjee⁹ also referred to India House in rather mysterious terms and suggested that some enquiry might be made. So far as I am concerned, I am perfectly prepared, whenever there is any reason for it, to have an investigation or an enquiry. But one must have some specific subject for enquiry. It is true that India House at the present moment is by far the most expensive of our foreign missions and at the same time India House is not just a foreign embassy. It is a collection of all kinds of important and miscellaneous activities, some derived from the old India Office, a very large educational section dealing with thousands of Indian students, a very large section dealing with our Army and Navy and Air Force, a large section dealing with the Supply Department, a large medical section and so on and so forth. Now, it is open, of course, for us to vary or change that organization or to limit our activities whether in the military field or the educational field or the rest. But, one must remember that quite apart from the normal ambassadorial functions, which again in London are far heavier than in any other mission abroad, London still continues to be one of the highly important world centres from the political point of view as well as from the economic point of view, so far as we are concerned. So, quite apart from the very heavy ambassadorial work that it has to undertake because of these various important departments, they can be examined whether any economy could be effected. That is a matter for examination, but this vague idea that something is wrong vaguely, does not help at all. Any particular matter that is brought to our notice can certainly be looked into.

Now, the House knows that in our dealings with foreign countries, perhaps the most important country is Pakistan. For a variety of reasons, apart from being our very near neighbour, past history and all that has happened in recent years have raised many problems. Past history has really made Pakistan part of India historically, culturally and the rest. So on the one side we are intimately connected with them in spite of all that has happened. Large numbers

9. Mookerjee had said that the India Office alone cost Rs 48 lakhs which was almost equivalent to the entire cost of the External Affairs Ministry. Reports about incidents and events there called for an enquiry by people who commanded the confidence of all concerned.

of people in Pakistan have their friends and relatives here. Large numbers of people in India have their friends and relatives on the other side. When people come from the other side, when they go from one country to another, they meet their old friends and they embrace each other and they forget for the moment the new barriers that have arisen and talk of old times with a certain nostalgic feeling. That is so. It is also true that what has happened during the last 3½ years has raised enormous problems. The Partition has made them infinitely worse. All these years, we have been struggling to meet this position and somehow to get back to normality. We have not succeeded although we have made some progress. Any problem, whether it is the problem of East Bengal or any other part of India as regards Pakistan, is basically governed by this Indo-Pakistan relationship which exists today, which is not a normal one, and behind which lies a great deal of suspicion and fear. How are we to deal with this?

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee thought that we were inconsequential and illogical.¹⁰ On the one side we talk of coming to terms with Pakistan, being friendly to them and arriving at a trade pact which he said helped Pakistan to get strong; on the other, we are talking in strong terms in regard to Kashmir or some other place. That is true. We do both, because both are necessary. Obviously we cannot take an attitude that there are no problems, because there are problems. Nor can you take up an attitude that because we have not come to terms in regard to Kashmir, we go out for an all-out conflict. These are the two positions, very logical positions no doubt, but logical only in the theoretical sense, not logical in the real sense of the problems we have to face today. The result is, we have to pursue in a sense both these policies. It is really one policy and the policy is this. We are convinced that India and Pakistan must as rapidly as possible revert to normality in regard to their relations. We are so situated that we must have that close cooperation which two neighbouring countries have. Mr Bakar Ali Mirza¹¹ said that he deeply regretted the Partition. So do all of us. Nevertheless, I think we all realise that however sad the Partition was, however sad the consequences of Partition were, the fact remains that Partition was approved by or accepted by us and it must remain. Any idea or attempt to go behind that is not only utterly wrong from the practical point of view, but is fraught with the gravest consequences. It may be some sentimental approach to the problem; but it is not the real approach.

Therefore, one recognises the fact that Pakistan and India are two independent neighbouring countries. Now, from the economic point of view,

10. Mookerjee had said that Nehru was following a policy of "dynamic inconsistency" with regard to Pakistan.

11. He was General Secretary, Hyderabad Pradesh Congress at this time.

from the political or any point of view, they should have close contact with each other. It is only when they develop those contacts that our relations will be more or less normal. Before we do that, we cannot get rid of the difficult problems that the Partition and after have raised. We try to meet them; we try slowly to get over them. For us to lose hope and say that these problems cannot be solved has no meaning. We may as well say that the world problems cannot be solved and therefore we declare war against the world. We do not. We struggle; we go step by step. Sometimes we succeed. Only recently we came to a trade agreement.¹² Why did we come to this trade agreement? Not in a fit of generosity for Pakistan though it is not bad to be generous because generosity pays in the end provided it does not injure, provided you are not generous at somebody's expense or at the expense of your country's interest. Of course, that would be wrong. Otherwise, it was not a question of generosity. An objective view was taken of the conditions apart from sentiments and a decision was taken which no doubt profited Pakistan somewhat, but which profited us also. Otherwise, we would not have taken that. There is a tendency to think that anything that might perhaps injure or harm the opponent is good because it injures the opponents. But it may also injure us. Therefore, the trade pact was a step; not only objectively considered a desirable step, but also one which went some distance towards bringing some normality in our relationship.

Other questions remain as the House knows. There is the canal waters issue,¹³ the evacuee property problem—¹⁴ very important matters; they remain. We have made various approaches of which this House knows. I will not go into them.

Finally, I come to the Kashmir issue. Normally, I would not have said much about the Kashmir issue because it is, at the present moment, before the Security Council. I believe it is coming up tomorrow at Lake Success. But I should like to say something now in order to remove apparently some doubts that have arisen or some confusion that has arisen, not in the minds of Members of this House, but rather of others. I should like to say here one thing. More than one honourable Member talked about our withdrawing this from the Security Council.¹⁵ That may be a reaction which is understandable in the circumstances. But, nevertheless, I do not think that, if the honourable Member thinks about it, he will advance that argument. First of all, I am not quite sure if anything can be withdrawn at all in this way. It will be a gesture which

12. A trade agreement was signed by India and Pakistan on 25 February 1951.

13. See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 6, pp. 61-78.

14. See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 13, pp. 101-109. See also *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 9, p. 246.

15. S.P. Mookerjee and Ram Subhag Singh.

will have no meaning. Secondly, this would mean our re-orientating our whole basic policy towards the United Nations Organization as well as to the great nations in that Organization. It is not a small matter. We have from the very beginning looked up to the United Nations Organization, not because we considered it a perfect organization, but because we felt that it was an Organization the basis of which was right, the object of which was right. Although it may have gone wrong often enough, nevertheless, some such organization was essential. If the UNO ceased to function today, it would be a disaster in the world. All the nations of the world will then have to start another organization, may be on a slightly different basis, but more or less something comprising the various nations of the world. My own feeling has been a feeling of distress that the UNO has somewhat drifted from its original conception. Nevertheless, whether it has drifted or not, it is the only world organization and it would be a dangerous thing for any country in a fit of impatience, to weaken that organization, and cut itself away from that organization because then there will be nothing left to cling to in the international sphere. Therefore, any suggestion that because of the Kashmir issue, we should do something which would amount to our cutting ourselves adrift from the organization, I think, is wrong and should not be advocated.

We have, if I may submit with all respect, in this world to avoid any sentimental or passionate approach to these problems. In regard to Kashmir, it has sometimes been said, not in India but abroad, that India's approach to the Kashmir issue is a sentimental one. Well, if India's approach is a sentimental one, I do not know what Pakistan's approach is and how it could be characterised, as one reads about it day to day from the Pakistan newspapers.

Anyhow, I can assure the House that the Government of India consists of persons—I know my colleagues—who certainly are not people who are easily swept away by sentiments. They are men of great experience and with a capacity for cold-blooded reasoning which is remarkable. May I also remind the House of a fact which people may forget, that after this invasion or raid of Kashmir, for some months afterwards, we had the good fortune to have Gandhiji still with us. We all know Gandhiji and the world knows him and he was no lover of war or of any kind of violence; and hardly a day passed when I did not seek his advice in matters that troubled me. In regard to the Kashmir issue I went to him many times. I went to him on the very first day when this problem arose, to seek his advice. I did not wish to entangle him and put the burden on him; nevertheless, I wanted to know his reaction on all important things. What he said and his attitude to the problem is not a private thing, because he repeated it in his prayer meetings. It was not a sentimental thing, it is not as if he was swept away by some sudden gust of sentiment, because he did not function in that way, but he had, after a close analysis of the whole problem, come to certain conclusions.



FIRST

ASIAN GAMES

1951



INAUGURATING THE FIRST ASIAN GAMES, NEW DELHI, 6 MARCH 1951



AT THE FIRST ASIAN GAMES, NEW DELHI 6 MARCH 1951

Now I should like to say something about Kashmir and the situation as it is today. The House will remember that a short while ago, a resolution jointly sponsored by the United Kingdom delegation and the USA delegation was brought before the Security Council.¹⁶ We felt when we read this resolution, I must say, greatly distressed. It seemed to us so completely wide of the mark to ignore so much of what had already happened that we could not just understand how the able representatives of great nations could possibly have sponsored that resolution. At the meeting of the Security Council the Foreign Minister of Pakistan also spoke at great length and made charges which were remarkable even for him in their wildness. I had something to say about it—I forget whether it was in this House or elsewhere—and I do not wish to repeat all that. But the way this resolution was brought forward, the approach of the resolution rather, at this juncture, seemed to us from every point of view, dangerous for peace. Now, when we find that the whole approach to this question continues to be wrong and distorted, one cannot remain silent. It is an approach which I think is wholly unfair to India and the people of Kashmir. We made it clear that we could not accept that resolution and so we were not prepared to suggest any amendments to it. Now, in the place of this joint resolution, an amended resolution has been placed before the Security Council by the same two sponsors.¹⁷ There is some improvement in this; but even now, the basic feature is ignored completely as to what the real position is, and there are certain recommendations which we have all along made it clear we cannot accept. Apart from this amended resolution, I must express my regret at the tone and content of some of the speeches made there, especially the speech of the representative of the United Kingdom, which display what appears to me to be an astonishing ignorance of the entire problem.

I should like the House to remember in this connection that not only when these resolutions were placed before the Security Council, but long before and since, there has been a continuous and intensive propaganda in Pakistan for *jehad* against India. Now it seems that with the background of *jehad* and with a background of wild charges made against us, it was hardly possible for any talk or settlement. The background has to improve before you can talk in a friendly way or at any rate, in a way which may lead to some kind of result. Now, India—I hope we have made it clear—desires peace above everything, peace for the world and peace with all our neighbours. But India is not quite so feeble or weak as to submit to insults and threats of *jehad*. From the very beginning it has been our declared policy that the people of Kashmir should decide their future. We adhere to that and whatever might

16. See *ante*, p. 367.

17. See *ante*, pp. 368–369.

happen, it is the people of Kashmir who will decide it. Because of this policy of ours we accepted the idea of a plebiscite, provided that the proper conditions for it were produced. Those conditions have been stated in the resolutions of the United Nations Commission and the Security Council in August 1948 and January 1949.¹⁸ It is because an attempt is made jointly to go behind those resolutions that there has been difficulty in arriving at a settlement about the conditions preceding a plebiscite. We made many important concessions when we accepted those resolutions. Certain fundamental matters remained on which there can be no possibility of any further change or concession. Both the substance and the order laid down in those resolutions of 1948 and 1949 were considered vital by us. We cannot agree at any time to a vacuum being created in Kashmir for the sake of satisfying Pakistan or her sympathisers. Nor can we agree to leave Kashmir unprotected or ungoverned or allow any outside authority, civil or military, to take charge of that country.

The resolution now proposed at the Security Council does not flow from the resolution of August 1948 but is a new proposition unilaterally produced. It is a new resolution and the arguments advanced in support of it by the UK and USA delegations put forward a fantastic and entirely new theory that Kashmir is a kind of no man's land where the sovereignty is undetermined. Neither the United Nations Commission, nor the Security Council itself ever advanced such a theory previously, and indeed, they could not do so because the facts were clear enough. Kashmir is juridically and politically an integral part of the State of India and at no time has the United Nations Commission or the Security Council challenged this fact. The fact that a neighbour country has committed aggression upon it and as a result of war a certain part of the territory has been removed from our factual control does not make any difference to this basic fact.

Because of our desire for peace and to avoid further bloodshed, we accepted the ceasefire agreement and allowed this military position to stand pending negotiations. This has been interpreted to mean as if Pakistan had not only acquired some kind of political right over the territory under its present control but had also a right to interfere in the other part of the Kashmir State territory. We cannot accept either of these interpretations. In no view of the case has Pakistan the slightest right of any kind. The issue of accession of Kashmir to India is something arising from the Indian Independence Act and the negotiations that preceded it and it is fully in accord with all that has happened with regard to the accession of many other States. This accession took place when India was still a Dominion of the Commonwealth and the act of accession was accepted on behalf of the Crown by the then Governor-General. It is

18. In the resolutions of 13 August 1948 and 5 January 1949.

strange for His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to argue that another Dominion acted unconstitutionally. The Republic of India inherited the position left behind by the British Government.

Apart from accession it has to be remembered that India today is a continuing entity, taking over all the rights and liabilities that vested in the old India. We continue to be in the United Nations without further election. We took over all the duties and liabilities of the old India and in every other way the rights and responsibilities of the old India came to us. These rights and responsibilities included the protection of not only the Indian States that had acceded to us but any others about which there had been no accession to Pakistan. Thus irrespective of accession we would have had an obligation to protect the people of Kashmir against aggression. Kashmir at no time has been recognised as a State under international law but has been an integral part of India. The Partition made no difference to our responsibilities in regard to Kashmir so long as it did not deliberately accede to Pakistan. We went to the United Nations not to determine the accession issue or where sovereignty lies. We did not go there to seek arbitration but to complain about the aggression of another State, which was likely to lead to international complications and probably affect peace. Evidently the sponsors of the joint resolution before the Security Council have a short memory and have forgotten how the matter came before the Security Council and the history of the tragic events that had preceded it. The United Nations utilised the position of our having made a reference in this matter to widen the scope of their enquiry and despite the protest of the Kashmir Government we in order not to lower the prestige of the United Nations gave every facility to the UN Commission. Until this moment neither the UN Commission nor the Security Council has suggested that the question of accession was arguable.

We have at all times been agreeable to the idea of a peaceful settlement by mediation. But we have not considered arbitrament as suited for the solution of a complex problem like demilitarisation at the present dangerous juncture. We submit that this proposal for arbitrament is neither a fair nor a healthy proposal and it ignores the basic facts we have mentioned.

A great deal of stress has been laid in the revised resolution and in the speeches sponsoring it on the proposal to have a Constituent Assembly in Kashmir.¹⁹ While stress is laid upon this no mention is made of the continuous

19. The resolution affirmed that the convening of a Constituent Assembly as recommended by the General Council of the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, and any action that Assembly might attempt to take to determine the future shape and affiliation of the entire State or any part thereof would not constitute a disposition of the State in accordance with the intentions of the United Nations.

threat of war that is hurled at us by Pakistan from day to day. We have made it perfectly clear that the authority of the Security Council is not challenged in any way by the proposal to have a Constituent Assembly in Kashmir. This follows naturally and inevitably from our Constitution and our general policy all over India. It is intended to regularise the position in Kashmir whereby the authority does not flow from an absolute sovereign or from a political party but is derived from the people. I want to repeat that Kashmir is an integral part of India and is governed, insofar as the subjects of accession are concerned, by the Constitution of India. We cannot upset or violate our Constitution, because of some resolution put forward in the Security Council. We are always prepared to have the assistance of a mediator to explore avenues of a settlement with him. How far such a mediator at the present juncture would be helpful is a matter to be considered. But we cannot accept anything that flows from the basically wrong argument of the proposed resolution before the Security Council.

I have ventured to remind the House of the legal and historical aspects of this case because of their essential importance. We have no desire to base our position on a legal formula only but we cannot accept the position that the law and the Constitution on which we stand can be ignored.

Apart from the law the political consequences of any proposal or suggestion have to be considered. It is not a small matter for some kind of an ad hoc decision but a matter which concerns not only the four million people of Kashmir but the hundreds of millions of people of India and Pakistan. It would be an act of very little wisdom if something is done which might lead to consequences involving those hundreds of millions.

I ventured to repeat some of these arguments in regard to Kashmir, not because this House is not acquainted with them or requires any convincing. But unfortunately in this world people forget, more especially when a wrong thing is said and said repeatedly, and so I think it desirable to say this at this stage.

So far as we are concerned our policy in regard to Kashmir I believe has been consistent throughout. There are certain essential basic principles on which we could not compromise. Apart from that we have always gone out to seek a settlement. Where these principles are being attacked we have made it perfectly clear then and now that we cannot submit or surrender on these issues. And I repeat that it is not a matter of prestige—false or true—on our part; it is not a matter of sentiment but of hard fact and of hard appraisal of the situation and of the consequences arising from any wrong action that might be taken.

I should like to express my gratitude not only for what honourable Members have said generally about our foreign policy but for the patience with which they have listened to me.

H.V. Kamath asked if, as the Partition had not been ratified by a plebiscite or a referendum, Nehru regarded it as approved by the people.

JN: The honourable Member can hardly expect me to answer that. I do not know if the honourable Member is referring to the whole or parts of the country or only parts affected. What I said was this: that this Partition is final and has to be accepted and any attempt not to accept it or work against it can only lead to disaster and to graver problems in the future. Therefore we proceed on the full acceptance of it.

7. Cable to Thakin Nu¹

Thank you for your message of 5th May. I entirely agree with action that you have taken to inform Chinese Ambassador of presence of Kuomintang troops on Burmese soil and shall also speak to American Ambassador here to exert influence with Taipeh Government to order immediate withdrawal of these troops from Burmese territory.² I am not sure that a reference to United Nations will produce any practical result. In any case, I would suggest that decision on this might await result of our approach to USA. Meanwhile, I am informing our Ambassador in Peking³ of position and requesting him, if his Burmese colleague sees no objection, to explain to People's Government your dislike of presence of Nationalist Chinese troops on your territory and efforts you are making to secure their withdrawal.

1. New Delhi, 6 May 1951, JN Collection. Sent through M.A. Rauf, the Indian Ambassador in Burma.
2. As the Burmese Government had no diplomatic relations with the Chinese Nationalist administration, it sought to deal with the matter through India and the USA.
3. See the following item.

8. Cable to K.M. Panikkar¹

Thakin Nu has informed me, on basis of evidence collected by his Foreign Minister² during his recent tour of Shan States, of presence of Nationalist Chinese troops on Burmese territory. You will recall that, last year, such presence led to request to Government in Formosa to order withdrawal of these troops to Siam or Indo-China, but apparently nothing has happened. Thakin Nu has brought matter to notice of American Ambassador and we are also asking US Government to urge Chiang Kai-shek's Government to withdraw these troops immediately from Burmese territory. Thakin Nu was intending to refer matter to UN but I have asked him to await result of diplomatic effort with USA before deciding whether such reference should be made. *Prima facie*, I do not see what practical purpose such reference should serve. Meanwhile, if your Burmese colleague, whom you should consult, sees no objection, you might assure Peking that Burmese Government is most anxious to get rid from its territory of these unwelcome and uninvited forces.

1. New Delhi, 6 May 1951. JN Collection.
2. Sao Hhun Hkio was the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Shan States.

9. Commonwealth Citizenship¹

...As far as I can remember I discussed this matter in November 1949 with some UK Ministers and the King's Secretary. After that it went outside my ken. I am concerned with it not only because of its importance but also because of certain rather vague understandings arrived at between me and the UK Government. These were not binding in any way but they cannot be brushed aside. The understanding was that there should be some kind of Commonwealth citizenship (to which India would be a party); that this should be on a reciprocal

1. Note to Foreign Secretary, 29 May 1951. File No 45-1/49-UK, NAI. Extracts.

basis with each Commonwealth country—thus South Africa would get no privileges in India and other Commonwealth countries could only get the privileges which they give to Indians. Commonwealth citizenship was to be something between nationality and the status of an alien.

How this could be done, and whether it was possible or not had to be considered in view of our new Constitution.

10. The Foreign Service¹

...4. In the Foreign Service, more than in any other Service, except the Defence Services, it is highly important that capacity and suitability should count far more than seniority. Every promotion should be governed by these factors. Every transfer should be considered in their light. I have a feeling that we have attached more importance to mere seniority than to these other and more important factors and people have been transferred and sent to long distances without much thought being given to their suitability for the particular post they were sent to occupy. The results have sometimes been unfortunate.

5. The Foreign Service requires not only the normal experience and efficiency in doing office or other work, but also a certain flair and special understanding of the political situation. The Secretary-General in some note has referred to competence in drafting. This, of course, is important because a wrong word binds us and has to be carefully weighed, apart from the fact that a good draft produces a good impression. While this is necessary, the mere capacity to draft is not by itself good enough, unless the content, which represents the idea behind the draft, is good. That content can only come from a fairly deep understanding of political affairs and foreign developments. This is peculiarly necessary in this changing world today. If any person thinks too much in terms of a past period, he will be unable to adapt himself mentally to new developments.

6. Policies have to be laid down at Headquarters. It is necessary, however, that all our missions abroad should understand the inner significance of those policies and the objectives worked for. It is not enough to carry out a particular directive without understanding its real significance. However much policies may be laid down at Headquarters, they have to be interpreted by our heads

1. Note to Secretary-General, MEA, Foreign Secretary and Secretary, Commonwealth Relations, 30 May 1951. JN Collection. Extracts.

of missions and others abroad. Unless they understand the real meaning of that policy, they are likely to make mistakes or give the wrong emphasis. I have often found this kind of thing happening, which indicated that there was no real grasp of what we stood for or were aiming at.

7. All this is not to be wondered at, considering that we are a new Service and the world today is rather like a jigsaw puzzle. Nevertheless, we must be clear as to what type of Foreign Service we are trying to develop and each member of that Service should understand this. Even apart from India, the conception of foreign affairs in other countries has been a changing one. Old-style diplomats are not always successful nowadays. As an example of this, we have seen senior and experienced British diplomats in some foreign countries functioning in a way which did not ultimately fit in with their own country's broad policy. They still thought in old terms, like the old English officials in India in British days, who were singularly incapable of understanding the vital changes that were taking place around them. Capacity no longer consists in courtesies and affable behaviour, although this is important. It must have a content and an understanding of one's own country and its urges and policies, and a capacity to explain them and make others understand them.

8. Capacity and understanding are therefore necessary. Suitability is equally necessary. A person may be suitable in one foreign assignment and totally unsuitable in another. There is the language question which is important, because a person not knowing the language of the country he is posted in can seldom do justice to his work. He will float about in the diplomatic circle, chiefly among those who have a common language with him, and live an isolated existence otherwise. Apart from language, a certain knowledge and understanding of the country's history, culture and background are necessary. Apart from all this, a receptiveness of mind and a flair for political events are also necessary.

9. Therefore, in regard to any posting all these matters have to be borne in mind and the seniority list should only be given secondary consideration. This specially applies to the senior posts. There are, normally, two ways of choosing a person for a particular post. The first method is to look at the seniority list and pick out the first person in it from the top downwards who is negatively not disqualified for some reason or other. The second method is a more positive one: to pick out the most suitable person, however high or low he may be in the list. It is the second method that must be employed in the Foreign Service as in the Army. This might involve passing over others who are senior. It should be clearly understood that this will be done and no one will have a right to complain, unless the decision is manifestly a wrong one. This, of course, applies to senior posts and, more especially to those at the top where seniority should not count at all and only capacity and suitability should count....

11. The Palestinian Refugee Problem¹

...Question: The Middle East countries seem to be forsaken by the United Nations and by Indian leadership too. Even though India has done a good deal in the United Nations, what has India done towards the Palestinian refugee problem?²

Jawaharlal Nehru: You say that the Middle Eastern countries have been forsaken by Indian leadership. Well, if you had said that the Middle Eastern countries have been forsaken by Indian friendship that would have been a serious charge, but you say Indian leadership. We have no desire to pose as leaders in the Middle East or elsewhere. In spite of what some people might say, we just do not want to assume the role of leadership in any part of the world. The kind of role we want is a kind of friendly comradeship with other parts of the country. There are so many problems in other parts of the world and naturally we think about them and sympathise with one party or other in a particular problem, but it becomes exceedingly difficult to interfere everywhere. It is against our normal approach to these things and we have found that interference usually leads to confusion more than to help.

Q: I am talking about the human problem, ie, the refugee problem.

JN: I entirely agree with you that the refugee problem is a problem which should be dealt with from the human aspect, friendly and helpful in every way. You ask me what we have done. It is perfectly true that we have done exceedingly little. Some money, we gave some time ago—not very much. You know very well that the refugee problem in India has been colossal in its dimensions.

Q: I am not referring to material help. I am referring to moral support.

JN: Of course, the refugee problem must have the moral support of every human being. No doubt about that.

1. Remarks at a press conference, New Delhi, 11 June 1951. PIB. For other parts of the press conference, see pp. 51–57, 247–248, 323–325, 394–397, 433–434, 446, 450–452, 462–463, 470, 487–488.
2. During the disturbances and wars in Palestine (1947–49), over 5,50,000 Arabs approximately left the area eventually occupied by Israel. In addition, several Arabs residing in Arab territory also lost their livelihood as their lands fell into Israeli hands. Responsibility for their welfare was assumed by the United Nations through UNRWA.

Q: What has the Indian Government done towards the amelioration of the problem of the refugees there?

JN: I do not quite understand your question. Normally, governmental support is exercised in the normal diplomatic ways, whether in the United Nations or in individual countries. Government does not normally come out into the open with a manifesto on the subject.

Q: Even in the United Nations, the Indian Government had done nothing to help the refugees. This is the feeling in the Middle East countries, particularly as they realise that India is doing so much there. So far as the Palestinian questions are concerned, we find that India has adopted an attitude of silence.

JN: I do not know to what you are referring. So far as the refugee problem is concerned, our instructions have always been to help in every way for measures to be devised....

LETTERS TO CHIEF MINISTERS

1

New Delhi
March 2, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

The outstanding facts since I wrote to you last are the presentation of the Central Budgets, both Railway and General.² Also the conclusion of the Indo-Pakistan Trade Agreement.³

2. The two Budgets have naturally drawn a good deal of attention all over the country and are being fully discussed. I do not wish to write much about them, but I would like to point out that in drawing up both these Budget estimates and in considering the policy underlying them, we have thought a little more of the future than of the present. It was not very difficult perhaps to lay greater stress on the present and thus to get the approval of large numbers of people, who normally think only of the present. But if we make ourselves responsible for the governance of India, we have always to think of tomorrow and the day after. In fact the whole idea of planning means that we think of the future. Therefore, to some extent, we have sacrificed present benefits, so that our position might be stronger later on. We have not hesitated to raise by a fraction, railway fares or to raise fresh taxes. This may not be the way of the normal politician, more especially on the eve of general elections. But I am convinced that we would have shirked our duty if we had tried (as we could easily have done) by juggling of figures to present a more rosy picture. It is time that we faced reality and prepared to meet its challenge. Only thus can we prove the mettle we are made of.

3. Our Railway Budget is a record of continuous and, if I may say so, rather remarkable progress. I remember, and you would remember, the condition of our railways three or four years ago. The War deprived us of locomotives, wagons and rails and we were badly in need of them. The Partition made matters worse in many ways. Vast quantities of goods, which could not be

1. These letters have also been printed in G. Parthasarathi (ed), *Jawaharlal Nehru: Letters to Chief Ministers 1947-1964*, Vol 2 (New Delhi, 1986), pp. 341-429.
2. The general budget for 1951-52 involved Rs 369.89 crores as total revenue, Rs 375.43 crores as expenditure and Rs 5.54 crores as deficit. Additional taxation was expected to yield Rs 31.15 crores. For 1951-52, a provision of Rs 77 crores had been made for capital outlay and Rs 62.62 crores for loans to States.
3. By the Indo-Pakistan Agreement, signed at Karachi between the two countries on 25 February 1951, India agreed to recognize the Pakistani rupee at par value and also to supply coal, hard coke, pig iron, textiles and jute manufactures, while Pakistan agreed to export to India bales, cow hides, sheep skins, rice, wheat and gram. Both agreed to place a number of items under the Open General Licence and to hold periodical conferences on matters arising from the agreement.

transported, lay piled up in Bombay, Calcutta and elsewhere. Our coal could not reach its destination without long delay. The trains were terribly crowded and hardly ever ran to time. Gradually we have met the ravages of the War years and the Partition and built up anew our railway system. It is very far from perfect and the amenities we provide for our passengers are the barest minimum. Yet even there a marked improvement is visible. Transport now is swift and sure. Our railways have been given heavy tasks in regard to transport in recent years and they have carried them out with speed and efficiency. I think that, among our achievements of these years, the improvement in our railways position is one that should occupy a very prominent place and our Railway Minister⁴ deserves full credit for this.

4. We have in this case, as often in others, two demands which are mutually contradictory. There is the demand, which I think is justified, for greater amenities;⁵ and there is the demand for no rise in fares or even reduction of them.⁶ It is not possible to have it both ways and so we have decided that it is far better to improve the railways in every way, give further amenities and strengthen their financial position for the future. The cost for this has to be met and it can only be met by raising the fares. That rise has been very little and though undoubtedly it will be an inconvenience to many, it is no marked burden. The very act of doing so is an act of some courage for our Railways Minister.

5. It is undoubtedly true that with an effort we can prevent wastage, improve the administration and stop or lessen such corruption as might exist. But all this, even if done satisfactorily, does not give us an answer to the principal problem of development of adding to the wealth of the country or ultimately dealing with the curse of poverty. Progress and development have to be paid for. There is no other way. The methods of paying for it may differ somewhat, but ultimately they involve some privation, some tightening of the belt, for all our people. There is no escape from this and the sooner all of us realise it, the better. The Soviet Union made considerable progress but she paid for it terribly. Ultimately progress will depend upon our savings, or possibly on borrowings, which have to be paid back. It will depend, of course, on the way we utilise such savings and the general policy that we pursue.

6. It is this general policy which has been considered by the Planning Commission for these many months. It was no good their putting forward some kind of an idealistic programme which had little basis in reality. Therefore

4. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar.

5. During the debate on the Railway budget proper lighting arrangements in trains and at railway stations and better conditions of travel were demanded.

6. H.V. Kamath and H.N. Kunzru objected to increase in passenger fares. Kunzru suggested that third class fares be increased only by $\frac{1}{2}$ a pie rather than 1 pie per mile as suggested in the budget.

they had to get to grips with facts and reality and to consult not only our Ministries at the Centre but also the State Governments. They did not have a clean slate to write upon. We have to build on the foundations we have, though possibly in doing so we may remove some obstruction or some ancient relic. The Planning Commission has wrestled with these basic problems and I hope that within a brief period it will issue its first report containing its recommendations. Because of our limited resources, it is essential that we apply them to the best advantage. That raises the question of priorities. Sometimes it is said that there is no need for planning as our resources are limited. That reasoning depends upon false premises. Planning is thought by some of these people to consist of some major schemes and if we cannot pay for them, let us not have any planning. As a matter of fact, though planning is always desirable, it is just when resources are limited that planning becomes absolutely essential, so that those limited resources might not be diverted into wrong channels or suffer from a wrong policy. Planning must be carefully thought out with some kind of the picture of the future kept in view. Planning must have the largest measure of cooperation from the public, if it is to succeed in the degree that we want it to succeed. It is from this viewpoint that the Planning Commission has been working and I hope that your Governments will continue to give it all the cooperation that is needed.

7. To revert to the Budgets. I think that everyone will agree that these Budgets are clean, straightforward and honest documents which placed the economic position of the country frankly before the people and have devised methods so as to better it. There is nothing very remarkable about them, no purple patches, or far-reaching changes. But there is an indication in them of the way we are looking and the policy we wish to pursue. On the whole, they tell us of a basically sound position of our economy.⁷ They tell us also that hard work and a measure of privation will be necessary for all of us if we wish to go ahead in this hard and competitive world of ours.

8. In drawing up our Budget and in laying down our general policy, we have to keep in view the world situation and the dangers inherent in it. At any moment we may have to face some of these dangers and it is necessary, therefore, to have a firm economic foundation for this purpose. Most major countries are today spending vast sums of money in huge rearmament programmes. We are rather unique in this respect. When armies are growing up in Europe and

7. In his budget speech on 28 February 1951, C.D. Deshmukh pointed out that the production of cement, steel and coal had substantially increased compared to the previous year and for the first time since the recession in 1946 the capital market showed the previous signs of revival. The improvement in the position of the balance of payments that had started with the devaluation of the rupee in September 1949 had been maintained. The exports position had also been improved by relaxing the restrictions imposed on imports in 1949 and this had led to an increase in revenues.

America and more and more we hear the tramp of armed men elsewhere, in India we have had the courage to reduce our army.⁸ We have done so after the most careful thought, for the primary duty of a Government is to take no risks about the country's security. We do not think we have taken any undue risk. We have fine defence services and we are proud of them. But strength depends more on quality than on principle. Strength depends not merely on the Defence Services but also on the productive capacity and the economic foundation of a country. It depends finally on morale and that unquenchable spirit which never surrenders to evil or accepts defeat. We have to keep all these facts in view. The defence forces cannot carry on unless they are fed continuously by the nation's productive apparatus. Therefore, while making every endeavour to keep up our army, navy and air force at a high level of efficiency, we have also given thought to those basic foundations which make not only the Defence Services but the nation generally function in a satisfactory manner. We cannot do all that we want to do because of our limited resources, but we can apply those resources to the best advantage.

9. You will notice that in spite of our financial difficulties, we have gone ahead with our plans for our major schemes and productive enterprises.⁹ We attach the greatest value to these, for they represent, more than anything else, the promise of the future. We have also provided, more than before, for the rehabilitation of displaced persons.¹⁰ In this connection I should like to say that while a great deal remains to be done and many refugees are still homeless and unhappy, a very great number of these displaced persons have been provided for.¹¹ If this picture is looked at as a whole and in perspective, the work of rehabilitation that we have done is remarkable and can well compare with any like work in any other part of the world.

10. Recently we have broken the long-standing deadlock between India and Pakistan in regard to trade. Here again we judged the question as dispassionately as possible without allowing pure sentiment to govern our actions. We thought naturally in terms of India's food. People accused us of a surrender

8. Expenditure on arms decreased by Rs 12.88 crores and the Finance Minister hoped to effect further reductions in view of the fact that the full effects of the reduction in the strength of the army carried out that year would be reflected in the estimates for the next year.
9. Various schemes of development such as river-valley projects, a fertilizer factory at Sindri, a machine-tool factory at Bangalore, ship-building, manufacture of dry cables, and industrial housing were promoted and increased allocations were made for further development of the railways and posts and telegraphs. Loans were given to States for river-valley projects, industrial housing and for "Grow-More-Food" schemes.
10. The total sum provided in 1951-52 was Rs 35 crores compared to Rs 20 crores in 1950-51.
11. By this time, 626,000 families from West Pakistan, and 185,000 families from East Pakistan had been allotted land. They also received as loan a sum of Rs 76,000,000.

to Pakistan;¹² others say that if we had to recognise the par value of the Pakistan rupee, why did we not do so a year ago or more?¹³ I think these questions and complaints arise from a misconception of the situation. We were perfectly justified in not recognising the Pakistani rupee for a variety of reasons. Indeed those reasons would inevitably have led, as they almost led, to a devaluation of that rupee. But the Korean war and the tremendous rearmament programmes of various countries, suddenly made a great difference. Countries which supplied certain forms of primary produce¹⁴ could now sell their goods for very high prices. It became a sellers' market for them with plenty of bidders for their commodities. Because of this we made some profit also. Because of this the Pakistani rupee, which had grown very weak, became strong again. World conditions now supported the exchange value of that rupee. For us to continue not to recognise it would have been completely unrealistic. Therefore we decided to take this step. It is true that many people will consider it as some kind of a surrender simply because we had opposed it previously. But I am quite certain that, in existing circumstances, it was the right step. The matter was considered very fully by our Economic Committee of the Cabinet and the Cabinet itself before we came to this important decision.

11. We have had many conflicts with Pakistan during the past three and a half years. It has always been our desire to put an end to them because we were convinced that this would benefit our country, as well as, of course, Pakistan. We did not look upon this question from the point of view of just injuring Pakistan, even though there might be a consequent injury to our own interests also. If a trade agreement benefits us and at the same time benefits Pakistan, we have nothing to complain of. The test is what good it does to us. It is an additional gain that it removes a barrier between India and Pakistan. I wish that the other barriers still remaining might also go. But, as you know, it is not our fault that those other barriers continue. So far as the evacuee property and canal waters questions are concerned, we made every effort to come to terms and even offered an independent joint tribunal which Pakistan did not accept.¹⁵

12. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote on 28 February 1951 that "senseless surrender is the only public reaction the Government of India can expect in regard to the trade agreement they have just concluded with Pakistan at Karachi.... it betrays, if anything, lack of judgement and foresight on the part of those on whom rests the welfare of the nation."
13. Asoka Mehta, General Secretary of the Socialist Party, said on 26 February 1951 that India had been forced to agree to more or less the terms that were available earlier.
14. One result of the developments in the international situation following the outbreak of the Korean war was intensification of the demand for some of the principal exports from India like jute goods, raw cotton, cotton waste and raw wool.
15. Nehru renewed the proposal in a letter to Liaquat Ali Khan on 8 October, and subsequently at a press conference on 16 October 1950. See *Selected Works* (Second Series), Vol 15 Part I, pp. 322-326 and pp. 421-424.

12. There remains Kashmir. As I write this, this major question is being argued before the Security Council. The UK and USA representatives at the Security Council have sponsored a joint resolution which you must have seen.¹⁶ This resolution is extraordinary in many ways. To the unwary it might perhaps appear a fair approach to solution, but it is far the worst approach that has thus far been made and therefore it is bound to fail. It is extraordinary because it puts aside and ignores agreements already arrived at between India and Pakistan and the United Nations Commission. It is extraordinary because it ignores completely what we have repeatedly said and it lays down a procedure which, its sponsors must have known, will be rejected by us utterly. What the motives of the UK and the USA might have been in sponsoring this resolution, I cannot say. But the whole approach is anti-India and, if I may say so, against logic and the facts of the situation. So far as we are concerned, the only course open to us is to reject it completely and to have no truck with it. We have advised our representative, Shri B.N. Rau, to do so.¹⁷ We have told him not to move any amendments and not to try to improve the resolution here and there. The whole thing is bad and we wish to have nothing to do with it. We realise that the Security Council, constituted as it is today, is very likely to follow the lead of the USA and the UK. It is with full knowledge of this that we have come to our decision and we are prepared for any consequences that might flow from that decision.

13. I have drawn your attention previously to the astonishing campaign for *jehad* and holy war which has been going on for many months in Pakistan. It passes my comprehension how any agreement can be reached, when one of the major parties is always talking of war.¹⁸ We do not want war and we shall not take any step towards war, but also we will not submit to threats of war. What kind of plebiscite can take place with this threat continually facing us?

14. An important piece of legislation, which has recently been passed by Parliament, relates to preventive detention.¹⁹ You know how I dislike such measures, and yet there was no course open to us but to have some legislation

16. See *ante*, p. 367.

17. On 1 March 1951, the Security Council was informed of India's rejection of the resolution.

18. See *ante*, p. 362.

19. The Preventive Detention Act (1950) had lapsed and the renewed Bill was passed by Parliament on 19 February and enacted on 21 February 1951.

on this subject. The present Act is much milder than its predecessor²⁰ and I hope that it will be applied with due care and only when there is absolute necessity for it. People talk of civil liberties being endangered by it.²¹ That is partly true. But it is also true that there are groups in the country openly waging war and a war which consists largely of individual murder and acts of terrorism. I confess I have little sympathy for these brutalities and inhumanities, whatever cover they may have.

15. Two private Bills gave rise to some discussion in Parliament. One dealt with what is known as *vanaspati* or hydrogenated vegetable oil²² and the other with the preservation of cattle.²³ Both these matters have importance and should be considered dispassionately. Unfortunately a good deal of sentiment and passion come into the picture.²⁴ There is no one in India who does not desire to preserve milch cattle and we have to find out the best way of doing so. But the fact is to be remembered that India which respects animal life so much perhaps treats its animals worse than almost any country. It is not by sentiment and appeals to religious passion that we can solve this or any other problem. As it is our food supply is greatly affected by the vast number of either useless animals who have to be fed or wild animals which destroy. Recently, there has been a dangerous locust menace in the Punjab.²⁵ It appears that this was partly due at least to a misplaced religious sentiment in a certain part of India, which came in the way of the destruction of locust eggs. Fortunately there is no such scruple in the Punjab. The whole population of the affected districts has been organised to destroy this pest which can do incalculable harm.

16. The food situation continues to be very difficult, though there is some hope. There has been some restoration of the cut in the rations of heavy manual

20. The Act of 1951 liberalised the provisions of the earlier Act by making a reference to Advisory Boards obligatory in all cases of detentions. It also provided for release of detained persons on parole.
21. The President of the Civil Liberties Committee of West Bengal and thirty "eminent lawyers" of the Calcutta High Court had in a note of protest described the Act as "not only dangerous" but a "stigma on free India". In the debate on 10 February, K.T. Shah discounted the fears "of threat to the State" in case "the freedom to the fullest extent as the Constitution permits" was given.
22. The Government announced in Parliament on 26 February 1951 that it would remove restrictions on the import, manufacture and distribution of *vanaspati* as recommended by a committee enquiring into this question.
23. The Bill was discussed in Parliament on 26 February 1951.
24. During the discussion on cattle preservation several members insisted on a ban on cow slaughter chiefly on religious grounds.
25. The districts of Hoshiarpur, Kangra, Jalandhar, Ambala, Hissar and Amritsar were worst affected by swarms of locusts.

workers.²⁶ We hope that within a month or so it may be possible to restore the cut in regard to other people. Food continues to come to the country from the ends of the earth. But this is just sufficient to keep us going. Meanwhile, the US Congress is considering the supply of two million tons of foodgrains to India.²⁷

17. As regards sugar and *gur*, the Government of India, as you know, have fixed ceiling prices of *gur* in various States and a ceiling price of *khandsari* in the producing areas of Uttar Pradesh.²⁸ They have also authorised that prices of *khandsari* in other areas may be fixed after allowing for freight, merchandising and incidental charges such as are approved for sugar. From market reports received from various States, it appears that the prices of *gur* and *khandsari* in most of the areas are still above the ceilings, more especially *khandsari* prices in the UP are still very high. The prices of *rab*, which should be lower than those of *gur*, are higher than *gur* in parts of the UP. It is necessary that State Governments should take stringent measures to enforce the prices fixed in order to make *gur* and *khandsari* available to the consumer at reasonable rates and to prevent undue production of *gur* and *khandsari*. It has been suggested that stocks be frozen to such an extent as may be necessary and then such stocks should be resold at controlled prices. I would, therefore, request you to take necessary action in this matter.

18. In a few days' time we are going to have the First Asian Games in Delhi.²⁹ About 600 athletes have come from different countries of Asia. This is a significant event not only for Delhi but for India and I hope it will lead to greater interest in athletics and games and thus to an improvement in our physical standards.

19. I am going very soon to Bombay to inaugurate a great milk scheme which the Bombay State has started there.³⁰ I am very much attracted to this scheme both because it is good and because it is the right way to deal with such problems. We talk of the preservation of milch and useful cattle and pass resolutions or even laws, usually asking people not to do this or not to do that. We do not as often do something ourselves about it and so the Bombay Government is to be congratulated on this fine scheme.

26. The reduction had specially affected the daily supply of free rice to colliery labour and plantation workers.

27. See *ante*, pp. 71-72.

28. As announced by K.M. Munshi in Parliament on 1 December 1950, the ceiling price of the best quality *gur* was fixed at Rs 19 per maund, the control on sugar was to continue and the surplus sugar could be sold at the rate of Rs 29-12 per maund as against the controlled price of Rs 28-8.

29. Teams from eleven Asian countries participated in the Games from 4 to 11 March 1951.

30. See *ante*, pp. 13-14. See also *post*, pp. 620-624.

20. We have to remember always that India is a country with a variety of cultures, habits, customs and ways of living. Each province and each group thinks of India as an extension of itself, rather forgetting the others. They press for laws which they think are right but which may be very hard for many others or might even go against their age-long customs. Some people want to introduce a uniformity in dress or in footwear or in food. Do they realise the difference in climate between the south and the west and the east and the north of India? Do they realise how people live in Ladakh and Kashmir and the other mountain regions of India? Do they remember that there are large numbers of tribal folk very different from them and with their own ways of living, which is in many respects perhaps better than ours? Yet we try to impose our own ideas upon these people. It is very necessary, I think, for all of us to remember that this wonderful country of ours has infinite variety and there is absolutely no reason why we should try to regiment it after a single pattern. Indeed that is ultimately impossible because climate and geography, as well as long cultural traditions, come in the way.

21. I have referred to the Planning Commission previously in this letter. I wanted to write to you more about this and of the way our minds are functioning and the objectives that are gradually taking shape. But this letter has grown and I do not wish to add to it much more. I would like, however, to mention one matter in this connection. Whatever policy we might adopt and whatever objectives we aim at, it is obvious that we can only attain success if we have the proper administrative apparatus for it. We must have a clean, impartial and efficient administration in every sector of public activity. This is always necessary, but it is even more so when we think of a progressively socialized economy. We have given much thought to this, as you must have done. The Planning Commission is paying particular attention to this matter and has asked Shri A.D. Gorwala,³¹ with the help of others, to consider this question of our improving our administrative apparatus and to make recommendations.³² In this connection, he may approach you or consult you. I hope you will give him every help.

22. I have not referred in this letter to international happenings. Nothing of great significance has happened during this past fortnight, though of course there is much that I would like to write to you about, if this letter had not already grown too long.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. (1900-1989); entered ICS, 1924; served in Sind, Bombay and at Delhi, resigned in 1947; later prepared reports for Government on administration, management of State enterprises, export promotion and stock exchange reform; founder-editor of the weekly, *Opinion*.

32. The report was published on 28 July 1951.

II

New Delhi
March 21, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

I have been very remiss in writing to you and there has been delay in sending this fortnightly letter. You will forgive me for this. But I am sure that you will give me also a measure of understanding. Somehow the burden of work increases and it becomes difficult to keep pace with it. This is especially so when Parliament is sitting. In addition, a host of visitors from foreign countries descend upon Delhi, and it is not always possible to avoid seeing them. Not all are interesting, but some of them are men and women of note whom I would myself like to meet. Among our visitors recently, there was Mr David Lilienthal¹ who used to be the Chairman of Tennessee Valley Authority. To meet him and talk to him was not only a pleasure but it helped to widen one's horizon.²

2. During the past fortnight or more, Delhi became full of athletic young men and young women from various countries of Asia. We were having the first Asian Games here in the new and rather fine National Stadium that has just been erected here. These Asian Games did not produce any records, so far as I am aware. But I think they had a peculiar significance of their own and it was a pleasure to see these fine athletes, from different Asian countries, meeting together in friendly contest. There were altogether about 600 of them here, the largest contingent, apart from India's, coming from Japan. The games were interesting, but what was even more pleasing was the way these groups mixed with one another and lived together in the Stadium Village in friendly comradeship. I am sure that these games have served a useful purpose in adding to the friendly understandings between different peoples of Asia.

3. A visitor, who is always welcome to India, was the Countess Mountbatten of Burma. She came on a private visit after a very strenuous tour of West and East Africa lasting six weeks. She spent a few busy days in Delhi and then went on to Burma for St John Ambulance inspection work. She will be coming back to Delhi before she returns to England. Lady Mountbatten has attached herself to India in mind and spirit so much that wherever she goes, she functions as a friend of India. Because of this, Indians welcome her in foreign countries with a warmth that is remarkable. During her tour in West Africa, probably her warmest welcomes came from the Indian residents there.

4. Partly because of her visit to Africa and partly for many other reasons, the question of Indians in Africa has been very much before us. There is, of

1. American public servant, business executive and writer.

2. Lilienthal came to Delhi on 15 February on a month's visit at the invitation of the Government of India to study the economic potential of river-valley schemes.

course, the never-ending trouble in South Africa which seems to go on³ in spite of the decisions of the United Nations.⁴ The Union Government of South Africa has again treated the latest UN decision with some disdain.⁵ We have made it clear⁶ that we can only meet and discuss on the basis of that decision. I fear that there can be no proper solution of the South African Indian problem in the near future. It is patent that we cannot surrender there and thus betray the rights not only of Indians in South Africa but the principle for which we have always stood and which applies to many other parts of the world also. At the same time, the Union Government continues to be obstinate and, perhaps, it cannot be any other than obstinate on this issue because its very policy is based on racialism. So, in South Africa there is this conflict on one of the vital issues of the world and it can only be finally resolved on a world scale. War scares and preparations the world over might cloud this issue for the moment and divert people's attention from it. And yet, nevertheless, it remains one of the basic issues of our time. Perhaps it is a part of the larger problem that troubles the world today.

5. In East Africa, and to a lesser extent in West Africa, there is the problem of Indians and Africans. Do they fit in with each other; do they pull together and cooperate? We have always laid stress, as you know, that we want no special rights for Indians in Africa or elsewhere, at the cost of the rights of the people of the country concerned. We do not wish our people to exploit the people of Africa in any way. At the same time we cannot tolerate anywhere in the wide world any treatment of our nationals which is against their self-respect and our dignity. We want no favours, but we are not prepared to accept any unfair discrimination either. The question of Indians in the African Continent as a whole raises issues of great importance from the point of view of the future, for Africa is rapidly changing and is perhaps the problem continent of the future. If Indians fit in there in a friendly way with the Africans, then we can be of service to Africa and her people and be welcome there; not otherwise. I am happy to tell you that during the last two or three years there has been

3. For example, the Group Areas Act enacted on 7 June 1950 envisaged removal of the names of the coloured voters from the voters' roll and their separate representation in Parliament.
4. The UN resolution of 2 December 1950 urged South Africa, India and Pakistan to renew discussions at a round table conference on the conditions of Asians in South Africa and asked the South African Government to refrain from implementing the Group Areas Act pending decision of the proposed conference.
5. The South African Government described the UN resolution as intervention in the domestic affairs of a member-State. It however expressed readiness to resume the round table conference on the basis of the formula agreed upon in February 1950 according to which there would be "no departure from, or prejudice to the standpoint of the respective Governments in regard to the question of domestic jurisdiction."
6. On 27 March 1951.

a remarkable improvement in the relations between Indians and Africans in East Africa. This is largely due to the good work done by our Commissioner there, Shri Apa Pant. In West Africa recently, elections were held in some parts.⁷ This was a new step⁸ and a leader⁹ of the Africans there, who was till recently in prison for sedition and the like,¹⁰ won the elections for his Party. The British Government showed wisdom in adapting themselves to the changing circumstances.

6. As a result of all this, a new relationship, based on friendly understanding, is being built up between Africa and India. Many Africans look towards India for help in various ways, more especially for educational opportunities and technical training.

7. In the Far East, in Korea, war continues, though the pace is rather slow. But whether the pace be slow or fast, the people of Korea suffer beyond measure and their country is devastated. There has been no major fighting for several months there. Gradually, the North Korean and Chinese forces have retired and the UN forces have advanced. I do not think this has much military significance and the position, for the present, might well be described as a stalemate. It is quite possible that the North Korean and Chinese forces might be preparing for a major counter-attack. It is clear that there can be no solution of the Korean problem without the full concurrence of China.

8. There has been some talk of renewed negotiations or approaches towards a peaceful settlement.¹¹ This talk, thus far, has little basis in fact. It is said on the part of the UN that they want to negotiate "through strength". Presumably the same idea has struck the Chinese also, who are certainly not too weak to give up what they have stood for. So, because of this search for a position of strength, little progress is made towards a negotiated settlement, and there is always danger of a bigger flare-up. All that can be said is that perhaps passions have cooled a little and an opportunity may come in the course of the next few weeks for some hopeful step to be taken. The crux of the question is still Formosa, not Korea. Neither party appears to be prepared to yield on Formosa.

7. Simultaneously with the promulgation of the new Gold Coast Constitution on 30 December 1950, the first general elections to the new Gold Coast Legislative Assembly from 5 to 10 February 1951 were announced by the British Colonial Office.
8. The new Constitution provided for an elected legislature and an executive headed by the Governor.
9. Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972); led Ghana's (formerly the Gold Coast) struggle for freedom; formed Convention of the People's Party, 1949; Prime Minister, 1952-57; President from 1957 till his deposition in 1966.
10. Nkrumah had been arrested in February 1950 and was released on 12 February 1951 on the eve of the inauguration of the new Constitution.
11. The UN Good Offices Committee was appointed on 1 February 1951 with a view to find a solution to the Korean crisis by peaceful means. Trygve Lie, the UN General Secretary, also made proposals to reach a ceasefire in Korea.

9. In Europe, there have been preparatory meetings of representatives of the Powers.¹² These meetings have yielded little result thus far and not even the Agenda has been agreed to. The main difficulty continues to be the rearmament of Germany and the representatives of the Powers spar for position. Meanwhile rearmament goes on at an ever-increasing pace and more especially in the USA. With the progress of this, other factors pushing the nations towards war come into evidence. Whether all these and other factors driving the world towards war will prevail ultimately or wisdom and restraint and the desire for peace of people throughout the world will triumph, no man can say.

10. In Iran recently, there has been the assassination of the Prime Minister¹³ and later, another Minister.¹⁴ Behind these bloody deeds, there lies apparently the story of oil, ever an unsavoury business. Iran is in a troubled and unstable state and Great Powers look upon her great oil resources with greed.¹⁵ A party in Iran,¹⁶ and indeed the Majlis¹⁷ also, have declared for nationalisation of oil.

11. Nearer to us, in Pakistan, there have also been rather sensational developments resulting in the sudden arrest of Major General Akbar Khan,¹⁸ Chief of Staff of the Army as well as many others¹⁹ for, according to the Pakistan Government, deep conspiracy against the State. Many rumours float about, but it is difficult to find out the real facts. It has been clearly stated by the Pakistan authorities that India had nothing to do with this business.²⁰ It was also stated that communism and the Soviets had nothing to do with it, but recently, hints are thrown out that perhaps there was the hidden hand of Russia.²¹

12. Officials of Great Britain, the United States, France and the Soviet Union met in Paris from 5 March to 21 June to discuss the agenda for the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers.
13. General Ali Razmara.
14. Abdul Hamid Zanganeh, Minister of Education.
15. On 14 March 1951, the British Government, which held a majority of shares in the oil company, announced that they could "not be indifferent to the affairs of this major British interest" and would be compelled to take "all possible measures" to protect this interest.
16. Fadayian Islam Organisation.
17. The Majlis (Parliament) had approved nationalization on 15 March 1951.
18. He led the tribal invasion of Kashmir and Kalat in 1947 under the assumed name of General Tariq.
19. Brigadier M.A. Latif, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, the writer and poet, and Mrs Akbar Khan were among others arrested.
20. Iskandar Mirza, Defence Secretary of Pakistan, stated this on 11 March 1951.
21. Liaquat Ali Khan said in the Constituent Assembly on 21 March that the conspirators planned "to resort to force with the support of communist revolutionary elements, making use of such members of the armed forces as they could tamper with.... The Government was to be patterned on the communist model but under military domination. For this purpose economic and constitution-making missions were to be invited from a certain foreign country."

There appears to be nothing in these vague charges, but no doubt an attempt will be made to profit by it. Another attempt is being made to connect this somehow with Kashmir. It is hinted that the people, who were members of this conspiracy, were bent on removing the present leaders of Pakistan and then launching on a war against Kashmir. Thus it is sought to impress the world with the urgent need for a solution of the Kashmir issue, because otherwise the people of Pakistan will get out of hand. I do not think there is anything in these conjectures and allegations. It does appear, however, that below the surface, all is not well with Pakistan.

12. As for Kashmir, I have recently made our position perfectly clear at a press conference.²² I have nothing to add to that. We are ourselves eager and anxious to settle this problem. But there is going to be no settlement on the basis of a surrender to what we consider a false claim and on a basis which would be, according to us, a denial of our pledges and a betrayal of the people of Kashmir. We are perfectly prepared for any kind of plebiscite, provided the conditions are fair and just and as had been previously largely agreed to. The USA and UK resolution on Kashmir in the Security Council ignored much that had been done before and, indeed, went contrary to it.²³ Whatever the reason and motive behind it might have been, it amounted to a treatment of India such as no proud and self-respecting country can tolerate. We have stood for world cooperation and for the United Nations; we have not stood for and we shall never accept treatment which is unbecoming to a free nation. Our instructions, therefore, to our representative at Lake Success are precise and clear on this issue and we are prepared to face the consequences, whatever they might be.

13. Attempts were made recently to hold what is called a Peace Congress in Delhi. Also another and a somewhat different "Congress for Cultural Freedom."²⁴ Normally it is open to any group to hold such Congresses anywhere they like. It is painful for me to come in the way of any such organisations but, in the circumstances now prevailing, we were compelled to prevent the holding of any conference in Delhi during this difficult period. We are on the eve of *Holi* and mischief-makers might well want to profit by this occasion. We cannot take risks. We did not prohibit either of these Congresses and we said that they could be held in other parts of India. We also said that we would not welcome foreign visitors to the Peace Congress. While any propaganda for peace is always desirable, the object of holding a Peace Congress in India

22. See *ante*, pp. 361–366.

23. See *ante*, pp. 367–368.

24. The Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom met in Bombay between 28 and 31 March 1951. It was inaugurated by K.M. Munshi, the Union Food Minister and aimed at "asserting and enhancing cultural freedom against the domination of totalitarian ideologies."

was not apparent. Our country and our policy stand for world peace and we have consistently followed that aim. Unfortunately, under the guise of peace, things are said and done which do not lead to peace. A peace Congress becomes just an occasion and a cloak for other types of propaganda which lead to an increase of tension between nations.

14. In this connection I should like to draw your attention to the habit of some organisations or groups to issue large-scale invitations to foreign visitors without any reference to External Affairs. This practice is neither fair to those who are invited nor to us. An impression is created abroad sometimes that the conference is held under semi-official auspices. Eminent men come here under some misapprehension and sometimes undesirable persons also come in. It is necessary, therefore, to be careful about such matters and for Ministers and other members of Government not to associate themselves with such ventures without due enquiry.

15. A recent decision of the Patna High Court about zamindari abolition has raised rather vital issues for all of us.²⁵ It is well known that the abolition of the zamindari system has been a principal plank in the Congress programme for many years. Indeed it may well be said that radical agrarian reform is the basic problem of Asia. If this is to be prevented, then our entire social and economic policy fails and the hundreds of millions of peasants and agriculturists can well charge us with a grave breach of promise. An intolerable situation would be created. At the same time it is obvious that the interpretation of the Constitution is a function of our superior Courts. We have to respect the decisions of the Courts, for not to do so is to strike at the very root of our constitutional structure. The Executive and the Judiciary have to pull together, even though they function separately and independently. While our Courts have the right to interpret the Constitution and we must respect and honour their decisions, the fact remains that the wider social policy of the country must be determined by Parliament or the State Legislature. Any other course would be a denial of democracy and a failure on the part of Government to perform its most important function. The Government is no longer an agency for the mere carrying on of routine functions. It has to lay down social policies and give effect to them. Therefore, it has become necessary for us to consider an amendment of the Constitution, so as to remove the lacunae which have apparently crept into it.

16. There has been some trouble in the Punjab and, even more so in Pepsu, over the census operations.²⁶ It is our misfortune that even in the collection of objective data, we run up against all kinds of passions and prejudices based on a misconceived religious sentiment. With a great effort, we did away with communal electorates, but some kind of a trace of them still remains, which

25. See *ante*, p. 184.

26. See *ante*, pp. 294-296 and 298.

gives rise to new problems. Our Home Ministry has made it clear that we will recognise no data collected by the census which has been vitiated by such passions and prejudices and the pressure of one group against another. This applies more especially to the declarations of language and religion in the Punjab and Pepsu.

17. The time draws near to the general elections. I hope it is clearly understood that these elections will take place in November and December next. Our Election Commissioner's Office is working hard to this end. But before we can finalise our arrangements, it is necessary to pass the Representation of the People's Bill in Parliament, to draft rules under that Bill and to delimit constituencies. I hope that Parliament will take up this Bill sometime in April. I have made it clear that Parliament will continue to sit till it has disposed of this urgent measure as well as some other important work.

18. The approach of the general elections has brought into greater prominence the future of what are known as Part 'C' States.²⁷ It is a little difficult to treat them by some single formula because they differ greatly among themselves. It seems obviously undesirable to deny them some kind of self-government or autonomy. At the same time it seems to be forgotten that self-government requires certain basic assumptions; it is not a mere matter of passing of an act in the Legislature. You will have seen or read the statement recently made by my colleague, the Minister for States, in regard to the Part 'C' States.²⁸ This should go a long way to meet the demands of the residents of these States. I might add here that we are having a good deal of trouble in Manipur and Tripura, two border States which are rather difficult of access from the Centre.²⁹

19. You know that, for some years past, the problem of food has often overshadowed everything else. We have purchased about four million tons of foodgrains from abroad and we have still some hope of getting a large quantity from the United States. I must confess to you that I have a feeling of failure in regard to our food policy. This does not mean that our attempt at self-sufficiency was wrong or will fail. Under pressure of events, we have dealt with one aspect or another of the food problem. I think we should consider this problem in all its aspects and in some perspective. We cannot go on in a

27. Himachal Pradesh, Vindhya Pradesh, Kutch, Manipur, Tripura, Ajmer, Coorg, Bilaspur, Bhopal and Delhi were administered directly by the Centre through Chief Commissioners.

28. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar announced on 16 March 1951 in Parliament the Government's decision to introduce a Bill to democratize the administration of Part 'C' States.

29. Gopalaswami Ayyangar stated that the establishment of legislatures in Manipur and Tripura States had been deferred due to some peculiar problems created by strategic and geographical factors. He added that local people would be associated with the new administrative framework in these States.

haphazard way. We must know exactly what our position is and what the future is likely to be. Only then can we fix up any worthwhile and logical programme. That does not mean that we shall get rid of our difficulties, because difficulties are the essence of the present situation. I hope that you and your Government will give thought in this basic way to the entire food question. We propose to do that here at the Centre. If such an examination leads to any far-reaching decision, we shall, of course, consult you. We shall not hesitate to take it if we are satisfied that it is right. It is a matter of deep distress to us to learn of the misery of many of our people, more especially in Madras and Bihar. We shall try to help them, of course, to the best of our ability.

20. I have mentioned above our expectation of getting foodgrains from America. We have asked for two million tons and suggested some deferred or special system of payment for them. In the United States there has been talk of a gift of at least one million tons. To some extent we made our plans in the hope of getting these foodgrains from the US in April. But April is very near and yet no decision has been taken by the US Congress. I must say that the US Government has thrown its full weight in favour of these foodgrains being sent to India. Nevertheless, the US Congress or its Committees appear to be in no hurry to decide. A stray statement by Shri Bharatan Kumarappa,³⁰ who was on a private visit to America, appears to have influenced the Congressmen there to such an extent that they delayed a decision.³¹ I must say that I find it a little humiliating to wait in this way for favours to be bestowed upon us. I wish we were in a position to stand on our own feet, even though that meant a measure of privation. Indeed if we can stand on our feet, we can get better terms from other countries. I have no doubt, therefore, that the only possible programme in food we can aim at is one of self-sufficiency. There is no other way out and there is absolutely no reason, except our own ineptness, why we should not attain this objective.

21. Let us not forget that it is not beyond question that our request for foodgrains from America might not be granted. What then are we to do? Are we to mourn and whine about it? Are we to surrender any basic principles for which we stand in order to induce other countries to be more gracious to us? We would have little self-respect left in our own eyes or in the eyes of others if we behave in this way. Therefore, we must give quiet and full thought to this possible contingency. We shall have to face it not by routine measures but

30. (1886-1958); a Gandhian, associated with the All India Village Industries Association.

31. Kumarappa was quoted as saying that "our chief enemy in the Far East is not communism but Western imperialism." On 8 March 1951, the Chairman of the Committee said that several Congressmen, after hearing this report, considered it inexpedient just then to bring forward the Bill for a vote.

by drastic steps giving this food question the highest priority even at the cost of other important matters. We cannot accept defeat because of pressure tactics of other countries.

22. I was recently in Bombay and I visited the new Government scheme for the supply of pure milk to the city of Bombay. This is called the Aarey Milk Scheme.³² I was powerfully impressed by what I saw and the Bombay Government is to be congratulated on their magnificent scheme and the success that has already been attained. Here was a constructive way of dealing with this problem which not only provides milk but conserves our useful cattle. Far too often we only talk about negative methods. We want to pass laws to do this or that without constructive effort. Laws make little difference; it is work that counts. In Gujarat there have been strikes to stop cow-slaughter by law.³³ I am surprised at the folly of such a procedure and at the lack of wisdom of those who think that they can solve this important problem by legislation. Because of this background, I appreciated the Aarey Milk Scheme all the more. I wish other Governments would follow this example.

23. I discuss in these letters international affairs and domestic problems. I wonder if I convey to you in any measure any sense of urgency or any idea of the explosive nature of the world we live in. I am not referring to the possibility of war only. Here in India we are, relatively speaking, a stable and well-organised Government. Our critics are many and their criticisms may often be justified, but the fact remains that we are functioning with a considerable measure of success by whatever comparative standards we can judge this. And yet the fact remains that in many ways the situation is explosive and I am distressed at the general lack of realisation of this. We talk complacently of elections, we discuss at inordinate length secondary matters in our Assemblies and Parliament, we pride ourselves on our democratic procedure, forgetting that all this is based on certain assumptions. If those assumptions go, then democracy also goes and all its paraphernalia tumbles down. The world today is in the grip of tremendous problems. There are political problems and even more so economical and social, and behind it all, are psychological conflicts of great magnitude. The spirit of man is in travail. It may be said that dark forces try to overwhelm the world and, consciously or unconsciously we are striving for survival, wherever we might be. The barriers that to some extent hold these dark forces in any country are not so solid as people imagine. If those barriers go, as they well might, then it will be a bad day for the world or for any country.

32. See *ante*, pp. 13-14. See also *post*, pp. 620-624.

33. Thirty thousand mill workers in Ahmedabad went on strike on 13 March 1951 to support the demand for a ban on cow-slaughter.

24. We in India equally face this struggle for survival. I am not exaggerating and I am not, by any means, pessimistic. I believe I have faith in India's future, but I cannot ignore the numerous disruptive and fissiparous tendencies that I see around me, the strange lack of awareness of people and their occupation in trivial matters, forgetting the things that count. Our democracy is a tender plant which has to be nourished with wisdom and care and which requires a great deal of understanding of its real processes and its discipline. It is not just some structure which a Constitution builds up. That structure is lifeless by itself. We have to give it life and purpose. That life must be the spirit and discipline that animates us; that purpose must be a well-recognised social purpose to the realisation of which we bend our efforts and our energy.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

III

New Delhi
April 10, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

This is a letter of apology. I have not written to you at the beginning of this month, as I usually do. Any excuse that I might put forward can hardly be adequate because a procedure we agreed to should be followed and should not be liable to be upset because of other engagements. Nevertheless I have to say that I have been exceedingly busy and not keeping too well.

2. I shall not write to you much today, but I should like to draw your attention to a resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Congress yesterday. No doubt you have seen this in the newspapers, but for facility of reference, I give it below:

The Working Committee have noted with regret a growing lack of discipline among Congressmen as well as in Congress committees and Congress Parliamentary parties, and an encouragement of disruptive tendencies, which come in the way of effective work and do injury to the Congress prestige and the objectives for which it works. In the circumstances of today the maintenance of discipline among Congressmen is particularly necessary and breaches of it must be dealt with according to rules made therefor. No separate parties can be formed within the Congress and Congressmen must not condemn or criticise policies which have been adopted by the Congress or by Congress Governments, except in party or committee meetings.

Members of Congress Parliamentary parties must bear this in mind in all their activities in Parliament or the State Assemblies. Any activity contrary to this will be considered a breach of discipline. The Committee, therefore, calls upon all Congressmen, in whatever sphere of activity they may function, to act with restraint and in keeping with the traditions and dignity of the Congress.

3. I attach considerable importance to this resolution. I am afraid we have been lax and the spirit of indiscipline has grown everywhere, whether in our Parliamentary parties or in the Congress organisation generally. Perhaps the biggest offenders are our own Parliament and the Congress Parliamentary Party here. I hope that we shall all try to pull ourselves up. The situation is grave enough, both internationally and nationally. The food problem requires the most urgent and concentrated attention. Reports that reach us from Madras and Bihar especially are exceedingly distressing. We are trying our utmost to get food from wherever we can. We had relied on getting a large quantity from the United States of America, but apparently for political reasons, nothing has been decided about this yet. It is obvious that we cannot barter our freedom of choice in regard to our political policy for any gift from abroad. We have said nothing in criticism of what is happening in the American Congress in regard to this proposed food gift and we do not propose to say anything. But the manner in which this has been handled has hurt us. I might mention that the State Department in Washington¹ has done its utmost to get this gift through and some of the American newspapers have also strongly advocated this.² Nevertheless, sections of American opinion in the Congress have come in the way.³

4. We are trying to get food from China, from Soviet Russia, from Burma, Siam and Viet Nam—indeed we are trying to get it where we can. China's offer⁴ is a very reasonable one, but the real difficulty is that of shipping.

1. A State Department memorandum of 3 April 1951 warned Congress that USA would earn the "lasting hatred" of India if it forced her to lift her export ban on "critical" materials to the USA and "might even result in the Indian Government choosing to refuse terms despite the suffering which would follow."
2. For example, in its editorial of 1 April 1951, the *New York Herald Tribune* wrote that the "wheat would be an eloquent ambassador to India and the less haggling and obstructionism that accompany it the better."
3. It was reported that some Republican and Democrat members from the South had delayed the Bill in the House Rules Committee.
4. See *ante*, pp. 40, 79-80.

5. You may have read the speech delivered by my colleague, the States Minister, Shri Gopalaswami Ayyangar, recently in Parliament.⁵ In this he used firm language in regard to the activities of certain rulers. These rulers are following a very wrong and foolish path and we do not propose to treat this lightly.

6. It appears to have become a fashion to talk about "scandals" in regard to the Government of India, and sometimes provincial Governments.⁶ It is amazing how some of our own people and newspapers talk lightly of these matters and thus bring disrepute to our Government and to our country. In a vast governmental organisation there might well be instances of corruption or negligence and we should seize hold of any such that occur and are brought to our notice and take effective steps to punish those who are guilty. There should be no leniency about it. But it is wrong and absurd for any responsible person to make vague and general charges without due enquiry and without trying to find out what the truth is.

7. A recent and rather remarkable instance was that of what is called the "jeep purchase scandal".⁷ I have gone into this thoroughly and I am convinced that there has been no impropriety about it and there has ultimately been no loss to the State. We had to order these jeeps urgently because of the great need at the time. Because of this urgency, we had to try to get what we could. It was a seller's market. There was no adequate inspection, although the firms employed for this purpose were of the first standing. There were errors of judgment, but it is quite clear to me that there was no wrong doing and, as I have stated, we have not lost any money thereby. In spite of this, the most amazing statements have been made in Parliament and elsewhere about this so-called "scandal".

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Condemning strongly the formation of the Union of Rulers and their call at Bombay on 2-3 April to protest against the merger of States, Gopalaswami Ayyangar stated in Parliament on 3 April 1951: "... Sardar Patel built up a great edifice. So long as I am in office, I will act on the footing that that edifice is going to be permanent, and any association or any agitation which has for its object the toppling over of that edifice will be sternly and firmly dealt with."
6. There were demands for fuller enquiries into the contracts entered for the import of tractors, jeeps, rifles, fertilizers, sugar and pre-fabricated construction materials.
7. In pursuance of the demand made on 26 March 1951, an account of the "Jeep Contract" was laid on the table of the House on 9 April 1951 by the Defence Minister according to which a contract for the purchase of jeeps worth Rs 80 lakhs was signed by the Government with a British firm in 1948. On 30 March, the Government clarified that although 17 lakhs were paid in advance, the deal had been cancelled and an enquiry instituted as 155 jeeps supplied by the firm had to be rejected as unserviceable.

IV

New Delhi
April 21, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

The world appears to continue on its crooked course and few things happen that cheer us and many take place that are distressing. No doubt it is not the fault of the world; nor does the fault lie with the stars. Nevertheless, we seem to be swept by powerful and apparently uncontrollable forces in a direction that is full of peril. Perhaps, living in the midst of these happenings, we take too gloomy a view of events in the long perspective of history. Our troubles of today may not have any great significance. There have been periods in the past which must have appeared to the men and women of that age as full of danger and peril. Today all that is just a page of history for the generations that have succeeded. So also other generations might not be unduly troubled by what might oppress us today.

2. It is foolish to be pessimistic; it is equally foolish to adopt a facile optimism which shuts its eyes to obvious facts when they are disagreeable. We have somehow to balance the intensity of the present, which affects us so much and demands our labour, with the calm perspective of history. We have to keep our balance of mind even though strong gusts of wind and passion blow about and disturb us. We have, above all, to keep some ideal, some objective in view and some faith in our capacity to work for it. If that vision goes and that faith disappears, then we have no function left.

3. At the present moment, almost all over the world, there appear to be strong forces at work which, if left unchecked, can only lead to a progressive or a sudden disintegration of society as we know it. There are, of course, other forces at work too, which check this downward tendency and bring us a glimmer of hope.

4. The war in Korea continues interminably and there appears to be no prospect of its ending or even a ceasefire. There are frequent references in the Press to some magic step being taken which might suddenly end it.¹ India is often mentioned in this connection as if we held the keys to peace. I wish we did. I believe that the foreign policy we have pursued has been demonstrably proved to be good for India and good for world peace. I think that it has averted or helped in averting the spread of the Korean war. It has forced many people to think on different lines and checked that lining up of peoples' minds which become blind to everything except their own way of thinking. The mere

1. Unconfirmed reports suggested that twelve Arab and Asian countries at Lake Success were informed by China on 18 April that the Chinese might agree to a ceasefire in Korea following MacArthur's dismissal.

fact that both our friends and our critics inevitably look to India to take some step to break the present impasse in the world, is itself significant of the virtue of India's foreign policy.

5. I need not tell you we have given constant thought to the international position and to the possibility of doing something to lessen present-day tensions. We have kept in fairly close touch with the Foreign Offices of Great Powers which are lined up against each other. We would have gladly taken some further step if there had been any hope of success. But, without such hope, such a step becomes purely adventurist and often does harm. So, in spite of pressure and repeated invitation, we have not taken any public step. But privately we have constantly tried to put various viewpoints before foreign chancelleries and tried to find out what their reactions were. Thus far the gap has been too wide for even an attempt to be made to bridge it.

6. General MacArthur's dismissal from his commands in the Far East² undoubtedly brought a feeling of relief to Asia and Europe and parts of America.³ MacArthur's ability as a General has stood very high. But his amazing capacity to queer the pitch politically has more than counterbalanced his military ability. No one exactly knew what might happen so long as MacArthur was in command. With his removal from the scene of action, this constant danger has gone. But that does not mean that we are any nearer peace in the Far East or elsewhere. In the United States there has been, as was perhaps to be expected, a tendency on the part of the administration to indicate that they are as strong as ever and that they will not tone down their policies in the slightest degree.⁴ In China, I have little doubt that MacArthur's removal must have been welcomed. But I do not think that they have attached much importance to it. They are, after all, much more interested in the basic policies that are being followed than in the fate of individuals, however important they might be. It is the Chinese view that MacArthur's removal had mainly to do with the internal policies of the United States; otherwise there has been no appreciable change. The Chinese Government has recently complained of bombing by American, or possibly

2. On 11 April President Truman announced that he had relieved General MacArthur of his command.
3. While the Japanese Prime Minister expressed on 12 April 1951 the willingness of the Japanese Government to cooperate with the USA, no official comment was made in People's China or the Soviet Union. Truman's decision was hailed by the Press in Britain, France, and other European countries. In America, although certain organs of Republican opinion strongly attacked Truman for MacArthur's dismissal, a number of leading newspapers like *The New York Times*, *New York Herald Tribune* and *Washington Post*, supported the action.
4. The US State Department reiterated on 11 April that there would be no change in their policies.

Chiang Kai-shek's planes, of a part of the Chinese coast.⁵ This has been vehemently denied by the US. As you know, China has attached the greatest importance to Formosa. You will remember also the Cairo and Potsdam Declarations regarding Formosa which promised to hand it over to China. The principles that the United Nations laid down in January last for a peace in the Far East contained a reference to Formosa, which could only be interpreted in terms of the Cairo Declaration. These principles were at the time accepted not only by the United Kingdom and some other countries but also by the USA. Now MacArthur has openly declared that Formosa was essential for American security and therefore must be kept.⁶ In this matter probably MacArthur reflects a strong body of opinion in the United States and, in any event, the US Government cannot go against this widespread sentiment there. Here then is the complete deadlock between the US position and that of China. Even if some way out might be found for Korea, this is so intimately associated with Formosa now that it cannot be separated from it.

7. The fact of the matter is that Korea and Formosa become just pointers to certain basic conflicts to which one sees no obvious solution. In Europe the representatives of the Great Powers continue their interminable discussions and cannot even decide on the agenda for a conference.⁷ In spite of this, it might be said that there is no near chance of large-scale warfare. But the basic reasons for it continue and preparation goes on for it on a colossal scale. How long will this continue, without some kind of an eruption, unless some radical change of approach and policy took place?

8. We are affected in many ways in spite of our policy to avoid alignment for war. The heavy programmes for rearmament produce scarcity of raw materials and generally inflationary tendencies all over the world. They make it difficult for us or for any country to get machinery or other capital goods. We begin to suffer with the rest of the world from the war atmosphere and war preparations which become the principal activities of today.

9. Within our own country, the situation is far from encouraging. The first issue, as ever, is that of food and we have had grave reports of conditions prevailing in Bihar and some parts of Madras. Alarmist speeches have been delivered by responsible persons.⁸ We must recognise the gravity of the situation

5. China reported on 12 April 1951 that US planes had bombed the border city of Antung and had raided Manchuria repeatedly on 30 and 31 March, and 7 and 11 April 1951.

6. In his address to the joint session of the US Congress on 19 April 1951.

7. See *ante*, p. 541.

8. Bihar's Food Minister, Anugraha Narain Sinha, said for example on 11 April 1951 that the whole of Bihar was facing an "unprecedented food crisis" and the immediate prospects seemed to be "bleak" due to huge loss of paddy, maize and wheat caused by rains, floods and continued drought conditions.

and do our utmost to meet it. At the same time we must not allow ourselves to exaggerate or to be oppressed too much.

10. The food situation has two major aspects—(1) how to meet the present crisis and (2) how to solve this problem basically. The first naturally engrosses our attention, but the second is equally important and has to be tackled from now. The immediate difficulty has inevitably to be met by large-scale imports of foodgrains; as you must know, we have tried to get them from the four quarters of the earth. We have purchased nearly four million tons and we are trying to get more and more. Even what we have purchased cannot easily be brought here for lack of shipping. In this connection, I should like to say that we have been greatly helped by the British Government, who have gone out of their way to see that we got the necessary ships. Recently, the US Government also allowed us to use some of their old mothball ships. There is, therefore, some improvement in the shipping situation and we hope that adequate quantities of food will flow in. Yet the margin between now and the monsoon is a narrow one.

11. For some months now the proposed gift of foodgrains from America has hung somewhere in the air. You will remember that what we asked for was not a gift but for payment on easy and deferred terms. If the gift comes, we are not going to refuse it. But we have repeatedly made it clear that we cannot barter away our domestic or foreign policies for gifts from abroad, however much we might need the latter. It may be a hard choice, but is an inevitable one. The latest news from the US is that Congress there is thinking of giving us foodgrains partly as gift and partly as loan.⁹ The situation is none too hopeful. But perhaps we might get something at least from them. I might mention here that the delay has not been caused by governmental action in the US, as the State Department has tried its utmost to send us this gift. But some members of Congress there, who have the power to delay, have exercised it.

12. Meanwhile we are approaching both the Soviet and China and both have made substantial offers of foodgrains to us. The Chinese offer is a more attractive one from the point of view of price. The difficulty there is that of shipping. We have sent one of our officers to Peking to fix up matters there and we have immediately bought some quantity of rice from South China. The Russian offer has one advantage—the Soviet will supply most of the shipping needed. But the prices quoted for wheat are very high and there is an insistence on our supplying some commodities which we ourselves lack, like raw jute and raw cotton. We are trying to get rice from both Burma and Siam¹⁰ and our Food Minister is likely to go to Rangoon for this purpose soon.

9. See *ante*, p. 84.

10. Burma had agreed to supply 240,000 tons of rice within six months and 350,000 tons annually thereafter, and Thailand agreed to supply 300,000 tons of rice immediately.

13. There is one matter that I should like to bring to your particular notice. While a good part of India is suffering privation and sometimes near starvation, it yet remains true that in some other parts there are surpluses of foodgrains. And yet, as it is, we cannot somehow get hold of this surplus. In some parts the surplus is sold openly at a trifle over controlled prices. This curious situation is almost Gilbertian, if it was not so tragic. The Central Government cannot directly procure from these areas and the provincial Governments either will not or cannot. I should have thought that at this time of crisis, nothing would be allowed to come in the way of our tapping all our resources in food. But some of our State Governments think more of their States than of the rest of India, not perhaps realising fully that what happens to other parts of India ultimately affects them also powerfully. This is a very serious matter and I would like you to give serious thought to it. Cannot those areas which have surplus be made to supply a great part of this surplus; cannot procurement by State agency be intensified? Or is there some means of our gaining our ends? It becomes increasingly impossible to look on at this obvious unfairness which is doing so much harm to our country.

14. Most of the States have their Food Ministers. The Food Ministers' business today is of the first importance and the most capable person should be appointed Food Minister. In addition, there might well be special small committees of the Cabinet in each State to deal with this food problem not only in the State but in relation to the whole of India.

15. You will have read of the recent order¹¹ passed by the President in regard to the Maharaja of Baroda. There must be few persons in the country who disapproved of this Order because there had been a succession of events in connection with Baroda which had not redounded to the credit of the Maharaja. For sometime past we were being pressed to withdraw our recognition of him, but we resisted this pressure. At last we took action. We have, however, given an opportunity to the Maharaja to make his submission to the President within a month and he has already done so.¹² The President will soon decide as to how we should deal with this matter.¹³ We want justice done and any kind of unfairness avoided. But, at the same time, it must be remembered that this is purely a political matter and cannot be determined by a recourse to the judiciary.

16. The situation in Nepal has been a troubled one and the old conflict between those who are now popular Ministers and those who are the upholders

11. See *ante*, p. 82.

12. On 20 April, he denied all charges and pleaded for his reinstatement.

13. While confirming the Government's decision to derecognize Pratapsingh, the President announced on 21 May 1951 that the Government would consider his request for allowances and residential accommodation and permit him to use the title of His Highness "as a matter of courtesy"

of the Rana regime has suddenly burst out afresh.¹⁴ The conflict itself did not last long and the Government gained rapid control. The King played a notable part. This incident has shown up the weakness of the old Rana regime. They have neither the populace nor the army with them. The situation continues to be delicate there and Nepal is passing through a revolutionary phase. We have no wish to interfere; but we cannot allow troubles to go on in our neighbouring country. We have taken, jointly, with the Nepal Government, action in some of our border areas. It is possible that the old Maharaja, Prime Minister, as well as some of the new popular Ministers, might come to Delhi for consultation with us.¹⁵

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. The conflict between the rival political factions in the ministerial ranks took a serious turn when the Prime Minister Mohan Shamsher Jung Bahadur was charged with a conspiracy to have B.P. Koirala, the Home Minister, murdered. As a result, it was reported on 16 April 1951 that King Tribhuvan had taken over from the Prime Minister the post of Commander-in-Chief, which had been held by the head of the Rana family for over a century.
15. The Nepalese came to Delhi on 9 May and after meeting Nehru, reached a compromise.

V

New Delhi
May 2, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

I am writing to you on the eve, or rather in the midst of important meetings in New Delhi. For the last two days I have been conferring with some old friends and colleagues who are Chief Ministers or Ministers in some of our Governments. Tomorrow the Congress Working Committee will begin its meetings and two days later the All India Congress Committee will meet.

2. What the Congress does or does not do is of course a matter of great interest to all Congressmen. But it has a much wider interest also because its decisions affect our entire political future. By the fact of its past history as well as its present position, it has become an integrated and essential part of public life and activities in India. Even those who criticise it vigorously, and sometimes even bitterly, recognise this dominant part. Indeed, it is due to this very fact that all manner of groups and parties find some kind of common bond in their opposition of the Congress. Whatever the merits or the demerits of the Congress today, it is, as it has been, the major fact in India.

3. During these last two days' discussion we have talked mostly of some of the basic problems of India and of the definite objectives that we should have. In the old days the Congress had a precise political objective, namely independence, and a broad social objective. This social objective was laid down in many resolutions and it was necessarily rather vague and did not deal with the specific problems of the day. We have to have that distant objective still. But it is no longer possible to deal in vague terms with what we have to do. Perhaps many of our difficulties during recent years have been due to this lack of precision in our economic policy. We have dealt with problems as they arose and not in their entirety. It was with a view to get this full picture and definite priorities, with a view to march towards our proclaimed social objective, that we started the Planning Commission. The Commission has worked hard and, I believe, profitably. As they have wrestled with the problems before them, these have grown and their labours multiplied. Nevertheless, I hope that the first fruit of their labours, in the shape of a preliminary report, will reach us early in June. That will help us greatly, I am sure, in formulating our plans and in thinking in a constructive and integrated way of the problems before us.

4. Food continues to be our primary occupation at the present moment. Last evening I delivered a broadcast on the food situation¹ and I tried to point out its gravity and the need to tackle it with all the resources at our command. I have suggested various methods² in which people generally can join us and I should like to draw your special attention to this. I hope to send you further instructions about these various approaches. But the first essential continues to be procurement and it is on this that we must concentrate. There is a tendency to relax in the surplus provinces and areas. This has to be combated and every effort made to get all surplus foodgrains to the areas which are suffering from a severe lack at present. We are, as you know, doing our utmost to get foodgrains from outside. But whatever we may get, we still want more and ultimately our success and failure will be measured by the amount we procure within the country.

5. The long argument in the United States of America for sending foodgrains to India continues. While it is perfectly true that the State Department of the United States has tried its utmost to expedite these delicate processes and a non-official food emergency committee for India has done splendid work in the US, it has not been pleasing for us to be made the subject of continuous comment and criticism in the American Congress. We do not yet know what foodgrains will come from America as a result of these Bills that are being considered there. We do not know how far this will be a gift or a loan and what the other conditions are likely to be. From day to day changes are made there. You can well imagine that this long drawn-out agony has done no good

1. On 1 May 1951.

2. See *ante*, pp. 39-43.

to us or to the US. We shall of course gladly and gratefully accept any offer, but we have made it perfectly clear that we will not accept any conditions which we consider derogatory or which are aimed at our changing our domestic or international policy.

6. From China some food ships are on their way to India and we have sent a representative to Peking³ to arrange for further shipments. As regards the offer from Soviet Russia, some general preliminaries have been settled and negotiations will begin soon in Delhi to settle details. Our Food Minister has gone to Burma⁴ to get rice from there.

7. Some days ago a riot occurred in Cooch-Behar⁵ which unhappily ended in firing and the death of a few persons including children. It was surprising because Cooch-Behar is not a deficit area and there should have been no real scarcity there. But, oddly enough, prosperity itself brings about conditions of scarcity. The people of Cooch-Behar, or at any rate some of them called the *jothedars*, have profited considerably from tobacco and other crops. Hence their holding capacity for wheat has grown and this wheat does not come into the market. Because of this, prices shot up there⁶ and somewhat artificial conditions of scarcity were produced. Enquiries are going on⁷ to fix responsibility for this riot and its handling. But it appears to be clear that it was more in the nature of a politically organised riot than one due chiefly to food scarcity. Whatever the facts, Cooch-Behar is a pointer and a warning to all of us.

8. You will have learnt that a new popular Ministry has been formed in Rajasthan with Shri Jainarain Vyas as Chief Minister. Rajasthan is a heavy and difficult charge for any Government and conditions there have deteriorated during the past months. The law and order situation is not satisfactory and there are many inner disruptive forces at work. The jagirdars naturally do not like any attack on their vested interests and tend to resist these. Though famous in Indian history, in some ways this large area is much more backward than other parts of India. I hope, however, that the new Ministry will tackle these difficult problems successfully.

9. It is proposed to have a popular Ministry in Pepsu also very soon.⁸

10. The situation in the Punjab has been very disquieting and there has been progressive deterioration in many ways. Politically, there has been a conflict

3. See *ante*, p. 78.

4. On 1 May 1951.

5. See *ante*, p. 35

6. The price of rice had increased in some places from Rs 55 to Rs 65 per maund within a course of one week in April.

7. The enquiry into the firing began on 29 April and a report was submitted on 1 May 1951.

8. A ministry comprising eight Ministers and headed by Col Raghbir Singh took office on 23 May 1951.

between more or less evenly balanced groups (both Congress) in the State Legislature. This is reflected, to some extent, in the province. There is also a communal problem as between Hindus and Sikhs. The Congress Parliamentary Board gave a great deal of thought to this and ultimately put forward a proposal⁹ which is rather unusual and which may also be described as not in keeping with normal democratic methods. But, in the peculiar circumstances of the case, this seemed the only step to take. This step may lead to some results which ease the situation. But I fear that various kinds of conflicts will still continue. It must always be remembered that East Punjab is one of our frontier provinces in a most vital area. We cannot therefore permit any deterioration there which would have far-reaching results.

11. The Security Council of the United Nations has recently appointed Dr Graham as the UN representative and mediator. As a mediator, we would have welcomed him. But, if he comes to implement the last resolution of the Security Council,¹⁰ then we can offer him no help. We are determined not to accept that resolution and not to work in accordance with it.

12. Parliament is continuing one of its longest sessions. It will probably continue its work till almost the end of this month. We have to get through some very important measures. The first of these is the Representation of the People Bill which is essential from the point of view of the coming elections. Then there is the Delimitation of Constituencies which will be laid down in a Presidential Order. This Order will have to be placed before Parliament for twenty days and can be challenged or varied by it. There has been a good deal of controversy on this subject which was perhaps natural as many interests were involved and they often pulled in different directions.

13. Another very important measure is one to amend the Constitution.¹¹ In the course of this amendment we shall endeavour to get some lacunae filled. But the main purpose of the amendment is twofold: One to remove certain difficulties owing to judicial interpretation of Fundamental Rights; some recent decisions by inferior Courts have carried this interpretation to extraordinary lengths.¹² The other part of the Constitution, which needs urgent amendment, relates to social measures relating to land which various State Assemblies have passed and which have been held up by judicial decision.

9. See *ante*, p. 300.

10. See *ante*, p. 376.

11. The Constitution (First Amendment) Bill, providing *inter alia* for the amendment of the Article in the Indian Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech and expression, was introduced in Parliament by Nehru on 12 May 1951. It also aimed at removing obstacles in the implementation of the Zamindari Abolition Acts. See also *ante*, pp. 168-170.

12. The UP Zamindari Abolition Bill came into effect on 26 January 1951. As soon as this was done, very many zamindars applied for and secured injunctions from the High Court to stop implementation of this legislation.

14. Agrarian reform is by and large the most vital and urgent of our problems. The National Congress has been interested in this for the last twenty years or more. There can be no doubt that present conditions cannot continue and the proposed reforms are long overdue. It has therefore become essential to widen the scope somewhat of the Constitution in regard to such agrarian reforms.

15. A proposal was recently made to postpone our general elections. Many reasons were advanced for this and some of them had weight.¹³ But the arguments against postponement were overwhelming. We do not propose therefore to bring about any postponement of these elections. It is possible that, in order to suit the convenience of some States, there might be a few weeks' postponement.

16. The Railways Federation has decided to take a strike ballot.¹⁴ This is a serious development. Railwaymen, in common with others, are suffering from high prices. But a strike at the present moment is not only the height of un wisdom but will also do grave injury to food transport which is so essential at present.

17. You must have read about the coming ceremonies at Somnath temple.¹⁵ Many people have been attracted to this and some of my colleagues are even associated with it in their individual capacities.¹⁶ But it should be clearly understood that this function is not governmental and the Government of India as such has nothing to do with it. While it is easy to understand a certain measure of public support to this venture, we have to remember that we must not do anything which comes in the way of our State being secular. That is the basis of our Constitution and Governments, therefore, should refrain from associating themselves with anything which tends to affect the secular character of our State. There are, unfortunately, many communal tendencies at work in India today and we have to be on our guard against them. It is important that Governments should keep the secular and non-communal ideal always before them.

18. In Nepal things are quieter, but the internal crisis has not been resolved. Our interest in Nepal is obvious. But we do not wish to do anything in the

13. For example, the Madras Legislative Council passed unanimously a non-official resolution on 17 April 1951, urging the Central Government to hold general elections only in February 1952, the argument being that in February a larger number of voters would be able to cast votes than in the months of December and January when rains and harvesting would prevent voting.

14. The Railwaymen decided to take a strike ballot on 25 April, the two main demands of the Federation being payment of dearness allowance on the scale recommended by the Pay Commission and creation of a permanent machinery for the settlement of disputes between the Federation and the Railway Board with provision for arbitration.

15. The installation ceremony of the deity at the Somnath temple was performed by President Rajendra Prasad on 11 May 1951. See also *post*, pp. 607-609, 612.

16. N.V. Gadgil and K.M. Munshi participated in the ceremonies.

shape of interference with a friendly and independent country. We have helped a good deal, and with success, in carrying out joint action with the Nepal Government on the border areas, where for some time disorder prevailed and gangs of men were doing mischief. In about a week's time the Prime Minister of Nepal and some of his Ministers are coming to Delhi for consultations with us.

19. An outstanding event of recent weeks has been the demand of the people of Iran for nationalisation of the oil industry there. A decree to this effect has just been promulgated in Iran. In England, the resignation of a very popular minister, Aneurin Bevan, had led to a political crisis.¹⁷ There is not much chance of this crisis leading to a breakup of the Labour Government. I think that that Government is likely to continue for some months when a general election will probably take place. In Korea, there has been some slowing down of the Chinese attack. Seoul, however, is on the verge of falling.¹⁸ The general situation in the Far East is exceedingly unsatisfactory. Both the USA and China have taken up an attitude which is incompatible with the other. Therefore, the deadlock is likely to continue and there is not much chance of a ceasefire or any other approach which may lead to a powerful solution.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. Bevan resigned on 21 April 1951 due to his disagreement with the Government's economic policies. He was followed by Harold Wilson and John Freeman.
18. The Chinese and North Koreans launched a massive counter-offensive during the night of 22-23 April, and succeeded in crossing the shallow Imjin River, north-west of Seoul, compelling Allied withdrawal on the right flank to straighten the line. The UN forces were however able to halt the offensive by 1 May.

VI

New Delhi
May 17, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

We have been having a heavy time here. The Parliamentary session is prolonging itself and is a great burden. Most members, including the Ministers, are growing rather stale and tired, but there is no help for it. We have to pass certain legislation during this session. There is the Constitution Amendment Bill, the

People Representation Bill, the 'C' Class States Bill¹ and the Delimitation matters. All these encounter heavy weather and I cannot yet say when the session will be over. It is likely to go on till the 10th of June and possibly a few days more.

2. Apart from the heavy work of the session, I have had to deal with the Nepal situation and the Punjab confusion. For the last week the Prime Minister and other Ministers of Nepal have been here. With some difficulty we have composed their differences and they will be going back to Nepal in a day or two. But such success as we have obtained cannot carry things very far unless the people concerned are themselves interested in cooperating with each other. Unfortunately, this desire for cooperation has not been much in evidence and there has been a great deal of suspicion on every side. The old Rana regime has no future in Nepal, that is, anything like its past. The change-over three months ago broke up the old regime. The Ranas continue to function in a somewhat minor key; their influence, however, has progressively declined. An attempt to bring back old times collapsed and led to a strengthening of the Nepal Congress elements.

3. It may be said therefore that the old style Ranas are a fading institution in Nepal. But they still continue and can make a difference. Our own advice has been to keep them in the picture because they can be useful in many ways and they cannot now do much harm. But the important elements in Nepal today are the King and the Nepal Congress. There are a number of other political groups and parties, but they are too small to make much difference. The representatives of the Nepal Congress are young and inexperienced and have not shown always the tact that is so necessary in a delicate situation. However, for the present, old differences have been patched up and the present set-up will continue with some changes in the Cabinet. It is proposed to have an Advisory Council, largely elected from the districts. This ought to serve a useful purpose and to bring in other elements into the picture. In Nepal there are three kinds of people—the people of the Terai on the Indian border, the Gurkhas in the hills and the Newars in the Kathmandu valley. Thus far, the Gurkhas have been considered the most important element in the population and they will, no doubt, continue to be important. The Terai are the most numerous and probably most of the revenue of Nepal comes from the Terai. But these people have had little say in the internal affairs and even now they feel that they should have more attention paid to them. The Newars in Kathmandu, etc., are relatively small in number, but being in the Capital city and round about, play an important and sometimes even an aggressive part in the political changes that are taking place. In order to have stability in Nepal, there must be some balance between all these three groups.

1. The Part 'C' States Bill provided, as a part of democratization, for the creation of Legislatures in some States and setting up of Advisory Boards in others.

4. I have referred to the Punjab confusion. In some ways it is worse than confusion and certain recent developments there have made the situation potentially much worse.² It is a tragedy that this fine province should be so full of political factions and should be unable to display a spirit of cooperative enterprise.

5. Since my last letter to you, the All India Congress Committee met in Delhi.³ Oddly enough, attention was concentrated not so much on the AICC meetings but on what happened outside. The dissolution of the Democratic Front appeared to bring us nearer to some kind of unity.⁴ But very soon after, this prospect receded.⁵ Since then, we have been on the verge of a major split in the Congress. Thus far this has not taken place and there is just an odd chance of its being avoided. Unfortunately there is a lessening of the spirit of discipline and cohesiveness which held us together, through fair weather or foul, for a quarter of a century or more.

6. One recent development in Congress politics has rather distressed me. Important developments take place and decisions are taken not in the AICC, but rather in small groups outside. There is thus a development of what might be called backstair or parlour politics. This itself is significant in indicating that we are cutting ourselves off to some extent from the mass movements and the large-scale contacts of the people that have been the backbone of the Congress. I think that for the sake of healthy politics, we should discuss our important affairs in our larger Congress Committees or in the Congress session itself. A recent suggestion has just been made that a special session of the AICC should be held and a requisition for that purpose sent. This session would deal with those problems which have been thus far discussed in parlours and private rooms. Whether such a session is going to be held or not, I do not know. But in any event a meeting of the AICC will have to take place fairly soon to consider the election manifesto, etc.

7. At the present moment, the most important development in international affairs is the resolution before the UN in favour of an embargo on China.⁶ This seems to us a wrong approach. The Aggressor Resolution four months ago was bad enough and put an end to any immediate prospect of a peaceful settlement. Now, driven further in that direction, the USA has proposed the

2. See *ante*, pp. 296-297.

3. From 5 to 6 May 1951.

4. The Congress Democratic Front, headed by Kripalani, following personal appeals by Nehru and Azad, unanimously decided on 3 May 1951 to dissolve itself with immediate effect.

5. The talks of rapprochement between the Congress and the leaders of the Democratic Front could not proceed further as Tandon, the Congress President, refused on 6 May 1951 to institute an enquiry into complaints of malpractices in the Congress and reconstitute the Working Committee and the Central Election Committee.

6. See *ante*, p. 431.

Embargo Resolution and they have succeeded in gaining the support of the UK, which had thus far opposed such a move. This resolution will no doubt be passed. But what good it can do, it is difficult to understand. It will stiffen all the parties in their respective attitudes and take us just one step further towards war. That war is not likely to take place for some months at least. But fear of war and preparation for war are widespread.

8. There have been reports in the Press of Mr Graham being appointed the UN mediator in Kashmir. We have had no official intimation of this and we do not know when he will come. While we are always prepared to talk about any matter, we are not prepared to implement the Security Council resolution in regard to Kashmir in any way.

9. The question of food is now attracting far more attention and effort, as an awareness of the situation comes to the people. In the USA, people still talk about a gift or a loan of 2 million tons of wheat. I do not know when this will materialize. Meanwhile, there has been a feeling of resentment in India at the long delays and obstructionist tactics of some people in the American Congress.⁷ Meanwhile, the USSR have despatched 50,000 tons and are going to follow it up with more of it. Negotiations for a barter of Russian wheat with Indian commodities are in progress in Delhi. From China too, rice and milo are coming. One of the chief difficulties as ever is that of shipping.

10. The food situation in Bihar and Madras is not at all good. While people may not die of famine, there is continuing undernourishment. Steps have been taken in Bihar to set up 5,000 fair price shops and these have helped greatly. The danger to us is not so much of a regular famine, but rather of continuing undernourishment resulting in a general deterioration of the people and a lessening of their capacity to work. Indeed, in Bihar, rural unemployment has risen greatly and it has become essential for public works to be started to keep these people employed.

11. While the situation continues to be difficult we are in a position now to say that we shall be able to keep up some supply of foodgrains in the scarcity areas. We are thus relatively safe for the next two months or so. If nothing further happens during these two months, then our position will be much graver. But we hope that in any event foodgrains will come to us by then from other countries. What other countries might or might not do, it is increasingly clear that we have to rely on ourselves. Not to do so is to invite repeated disappointments and to go some steps towards a major disaster.

12. You must have seen my broadcast about food⁸ in which I made certain suggestions. I called for gift foodgrains for Bihar and Madras and called upon

7. For example, *The Times of India*, commenting editorially on 11 May on the US Congressional policy, stated that "It is not humane to dangle food beyond a starving man's reach, nor is it proper to lacerate his misery by turning the knife in the wound."

8. See *ante*, pp. 39-43.

the people to miss a meal a week and donate the money thus saved for Bihar relief. I think there is considerable importance in these personal appeals. Perhaps the amount of gift foodgrains we get will not be very large, although from all accounts big collections are being made. These gift foodgrains will be kept apart from the normal ration supply and will be used as gifts, more especially to women and children.

13. Another suggestion I made was to have village committees whose chief function should be to see to it that no one starves in their village. Their second function will be to prevent hoarding and to disclose the names of big-scale hoarders in their areas. I attach much importance to this suggestion and I hope that in your State you will encourage the formation of these committees in rural areas. If this committee system works at all, it will make a vast difference in the psychological approach to this problem. It will bring in popular cooperation without which our official efforts cannot go far. I hope therefore that you will specially interest yourself in the formation of these committees, which should be non-official.

14. You must have heard of Shri Vinoba Bhave's tour in Hyderabad and especially in Telengana.⁹ This is worthy of special attention. From all accounts, his tour has already resulted in a marked improvement in the situation. This tour demonstrates to us that a psychological and friendly approach often yields greater results than coercion.

15. The Bill for the amendment of the Constitution is meeting with a good deal of opposition in the Press and elsewhere. We hope however to get it through, even though that requires a two-thirds majority and half the total members attending. I think that much of the criticism is misconceived. There is a strange fear in the minds of some that Parliament might misbehave and therefore should not have too much powers given to it in such matters. The peculiar urgency of these amendments arose because of certain judicial decisions which came in the way of zamindari abolition legislation.

16. Some time ago, I drew your attention to what has been known as the Etawah project. I am now sending you a note on this which will enable you to form some idea of the progress made.

17. This letter has been written in haste and is, I am afraid, rather scrappy. You will understand my present predicament.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. Vinoba Bhave during his *padyatra* (walking tour) of Telengana between 15 April and 6 June 1951 toured about two hundred villages and out of about 12,000 acres of land received as donation distributed 9,000 acres among the landless. He also settled five hundred disputes during his tour of the villages.

VII

New Delhi
June 2, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

The Press of India has been full of the Constitution Amendment Bill during the last fortnight. In Parliament, all of us have been heavily worked and the strain, after a long session, has been great. As I write to you, the Constitution Amendment Bill is in its last stages. We have passed the principal clauses with overwhelming majorities in the second reading. By this evening, probably, the third reading will also be passed.

2. You will have noticed the very great majorities which have voted for these amendments. Thus far, the largest number voting against any amendment has been 19 as opposed to 228 for the amendment. This was in regard to Clause 2 (Article 19), which has been the cause of the greatest argument and the fiercest controversy. This Article, as you know, deals with freedom of speech and expression. We have been accused of curbing and throttling the Press and of trying to behave in an autocratic manner in regard to it. We have met that challenge and, I think, proved to all reasonable satisfaction that there is no such intention or attempt. Nevertheless, the Press campaign against these amendments has gone on and some foreign papers have eagerly taken advantage of this to condemn us. By some odd logic, they have connected this with Kashmir and tried to show how evil our intentions were.

3. I can understand a certain apprehension in the minds of the Press and I can appreciate their fighting for their rights, even though those rights have not really been threatened in the least. But I confess that I have been surprised at the vehemence of this opposition. I have not been surprised at some foreign Press comments which, progressively, grow more malevolent towards India. This is no doubt due to the fact that we insist on continuing our independent foreign policy and this is not liked. Kashmir comes into the picture because of this, and recently we had some further outbursts in the United Nations Security Council, which showed how far the UK and USA representatives had moved from any position of non-partisanship and neutrality.¹

4. The Amendment Bill will be passed.² I am glad that there has been this great argument about it in the Press and in the country. Such public debates waken up people and force them to think, even though the direction of the thought might not always be the right one. Nothing is worse in a democracy than complacency on the part of a Government or of the people. Unfortunately there is that tendency to complacency and passivity, except in the use of strong

1. See *ante*, pp. 367-369, 379, 382.

2. It was passed by Parliament on 2 June 1951 by a majority of 228 against 20 votes.

language. Our Congress politics also tend to be rather unreal. There is a great deal of talk of secession and of prominent persons resigning from the Congress,³ and yet there is really little public argument on any issue. One would have thought that when such major issues were before the country, there would be fierce debate in the All India Congress Committee such as there used to be in the old days. But the AICC meets in a humdrum way and does routine work, and hardly any mention is made in the course of its proceedings of what is really ailing the Congress and the country. There appears to be something wrong about this development. Our politics progressively become of the parlour variety. I hope we shall pull ourselves out of this groove which must be harmful for any healthy development.

5. Coming back to the amendments of the Constitution, these cast a heavy burden upon us. We must not imagine that we can now use all the old acts which, for the moment, had been put out of commission by some judicial pronouncements. We have given many assurances to Parliament and the country about this matter. All the old acts, those applying to the Press especially, should be kept, as far as possible, at arm's length. The law of sedition,⁴ as such and as applied in the old days, should have no place in our statute book. But what must continue to have a place and be acted upon is the law dealing with the spread of racial and communal hatred. About this, we have to be careful and not prevent the atmosphere to be vitiated more than it already is.

6. As has been stated by the Home Minister,⁵ it is our intention to put an end to some of the old and out-of-date enactments and to bring forward a comprehensive measure more in tune with present conditions. Apart from this, I think that we must tackle the problem of the Press in a bigger way, as they did in the United Kingdom by appointing a Royal Commission.⁶ Our Press has grown and is important and we must help it to play its proper part in public affairs. But we must also help it to play it in the right way and prevent wrong tendencies to develop. We talk of the freedom of the Press and it is right that we should do so, but progressively our Press is controlled by a handful of

3. On 17 May 1951, Kripalani resigned from the Congress Party charging that the Party was not able to check the deterioration in the country. A few days later, Sucheta Kripalani, Sadiq Ali and Ramnarain Singh also resigned from the Congress.

4. The sedition law was incorporated in the Indian Penal Code in 1870 to be used against "provocative writings or speeches advocating incitement to or abetment of waging war against Her Majesty or Government established by law in British India." Later, two sections were added in 1898 to punish "promotion of enmity between classes" and penalize "statements conducive to public mischief."

5. The Government's intention to amend certain old enactments like the Indian Official Secrets Act, 1923, the Indian Press (Emergency) Powers Act, 1931, and the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867 and the Indian States Protection Act, 1934, was announced by C. Rajagopalachari in Parliament on 12 May 1951.

6. The Royal Commission on the Press, appointed in 1947, submitted its report in 1949.

people who not only own chains of newspapers but also control the news services. This is not a healthy development and should be examined.

7. A grave danger today is the growth of innumerable petty news-sheets in various languages, which are often of an exceedingly low standard and indulge in depths of vulgarity. This has little to do with politics although it is often used for political purposes. I have made it clear in Parliament⁷ that we shall not come in the way of even the severest political criticism, either of our internal or external policy. I have also said that we do not wish to come in the way of the criticism of the policies of foreign countries, subject only to discouraging anything which might lead to a serious situation between us and another country or might even tend towards war. There is at present no law concerning criticism of foreign countries except an out-of-date statute which has no application today. It is not our intention to make any law affecting foreign countries.

8. In the course of the debate in Parliament, a great deal was said in favour of allowing Parliament only to make laws in terms of the new amendments. There was a certain distrust and suspicion of the State Governments and legislatures, not all, of course, but some. There was also the argument that such laws should be uniform throughout India. There was something in these arguments because of the great diversity in the States. As the new Bill is being passed the authority remains with the States. But as the subjects are concurrent, it is inevitable that any laws made should come up to the Centre for scrutiny and for the avoidance of any conflict between two different pieces of legislation.

9. I would therefore suggest to you to be careful in taking any action as a result of these amendments without reference to us. In particular, any interference with the freedom of the Press had to be avoided, except in cases of extreme vulgarity and defamation. In such cases, it is desirable to have recourse to the criminal law. It is not proper to allow false charges to remain unanswered.

10. Much was said about precensorship.⁸ This is rightly objected to and I think it should not be indulged in under any circumstances.

11. With the passing of this amending legislation, a number of zamindari and land acts have been validated. This is a great gain, for now it will be possible for the States concerned to go ahead with the abolition of the zamindari system and other land reforms. It must be remembered that this present first stage of legislation chiefly concerns itself with the abolition of the zamindari system and of large estates. It is not meant to apply to the relatively small ryot or to the *ryotwari* system as such. In the Punjab, peasant proprietors are called

7. On 31 May 1951.

8. For example, Deshbandhu Gupta said in Parliament on 31 May 1951 that the Standing Committee of the Newspaper Editors' Conference was unable to agree to the proposal which called for submission of their copies for censorship to magistrates who might not know the difference between a leading article and a news item.

zamindars. This new act does not apply to them as such or to their like elsewhere. But it is clear that in any scheme of land reform, we have to aim at something more than mere abolition of big zamindaris. Already in some States a maximum figure for a holding for a peasant proprietor has been laid down.⁹ This may be 50 acres or less. Land reform will not only go in this direction but should also aim at cooperative farming, without which there is little hope of efficient and profitable farming and greater food production. For the present, however, we must concentrate on the immediate issue and that is the abolition of the jagirdari and zamindari systems and their like.

12. In some States, the validation by this act of some legislation, which had been declared *ultra vires* by the local High Courts, might well produce a somewhat complicated situation. Some acts might have been done during this interval, after the declaration as *ultra vires*. What then are we to do about them now? I suggest that all these matters should be carefully examined and no sudden and upsetting step taken. I suggest also that the new zamindari abolition acts should be scrutinised to find out what, if any, injustice is done in individual cases. In comprehensive pieces of legislation, it is inevitable that some cases of individual injustice should arise. We cannot help that, but where we can remove this injustice, either by executive action or even by a small amending bill, this might be considered. We shall gladly help you in this so far as we can. We want to avoid continuous litigation. Of course, this is not in our power completely and it is quite likely that even the amending act might be challenged in some way in the courts. If so, we shall meet the challenge. We cannot possibly allow our great social schemes to be held up.

13. We have had prolonged sessions of Parliament and we are all anxious to see the end of this present session. But we have still important work to do. We have to pass finally the Representation of the People (No 2) Bill, which is essential for the coming elections. We have to pass the part 'C' States Bill and we have to finalise the Delimitation of Constituencies. Perhaps we might be able to finish our work by the 10th of this month.¹⁰ There is likely to be another session, though a briefer one, early in August.

14. The food situation in the country has definitely improved. I think we can say with confidence that we have won in our struggle against an impending famine on a large scale. That does not mean, of course, that we are out of the wood and we shall have to face many difficult and even dangerous situations. But we have, in a sense, turned the corner and there is no reason why we should be submerged by famine now, if we are careful and wide awake.

15. Foodgrains are pouring in from various countries and are taxing, to the utmost, our port capacities and transport system. We have already stocked

9. The UP Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Bill, which came into force on 26 January 1951, fixed the limit of land holding at thirty acres.

10. The session of Parliament ended on 9 June 1951.

adequately those areas, which are likely to be cut off during the monsoon, and we are rushing food to all the other scarcity areas. In Bihar we have been sending foodgrains at the rate of more than 100,000 tons per month. A feeling of confidence is returning not only in Bihar but in other parts of the country. A positive and welcome sign is the fall in prices of foodgrains in the open market in Bihar.

16. The food aid bills of the US Congress have not been finalised yet, but there seems to be every chance of this being done in the course of the next week or ten days. Once this is done, our food position is assured for the rest of this year. Even without it, we could have struggled through, though with difficulty. We have been helped, as you know, by food supplies from China and the USSR. We have thus far purchased 400,000 tons of milo and rice from China and 100,000 tons of wheat from Russia. We can perhaps get a little more from them, if need arises, but for the present we can hardly receive more because of the limited capacities of our ports.

17. While we must be grateful to all these countries we should not forget that we owe a great deal to the United Kingdom for helping us to get the necessary shipping. Norway has also made a very generous offer to supply us shipping free of cost. Indeed, we have received various kinds of offers from many countries in the world.

18. Though, from one point of view, the food situation has definitely improved and there is no likelihood of a lack of foodgrains in India, another danger threatens us. This is the unemployment that has grown in rural areas owing to lack of rain in the past and the consequent lack of purchasing power. The only way to remedy this is to have public works on a large scale. Bihar has done well in this respect. In addition, free distribution of food has also taken place over considerable areas. You will remember my appeal for free gifts of foodgrains. This appeal has had a good response in India and, to some extent, in other countries also. Where there is lack of purchasing power, we have to feed people in some other way. The proper way would be to offer work. I am glad that this is more or less realised now. Our success in meeting this grave danger of famine is not only good in itself but is important from many other points of view. It produces confidence in the people and helps to get rid of that feeling of passivity and submission to a blind fate which is so harmful. We can thus make this grave crisis yield rich results, if we only tackle it in the right way. There are sufficient indications today that various States are tackling it properly and therefore there is this return of a spirit of confidence.

19. I have referred to Kashmir earlier in this letter. The Security Council has recently met again to pass yet another extraordinary resolution. I confess that my respect for the Security Council lessens. Our position has been made perfectly clear to them and to the world. We shall abide by every single assurance

that we have given to the United Nations, but we will tolerate no interference in our internal affairs in Kashmir or elsewhere. We have not accepted the last resolution of the Security Council and we shall not implement it. If the new mediator, Mr Graham, comes here, we shall treat him with courtesy and explain to him anything that he wishes explained. Beyond that, we shall not go. Meanwhile, we shall certainly proceed with the Constituent Assembly in Kashmir. We have said that this Constituent Assembly is not meeting to decide the question of accession of Kashmir State. That is so. But no one can prevent it from expressing any opinion it chooses on any issue.

20. I confess I have been greatly disturbed by the policy adopted by the UK and the USA Governments in regard to Kashmir. The speeches delivered by their representatives in the Security Council exhibit an amazing ignorance and lack of understanding of realities. Because Pakistan shouts a great deal and threatens all manner of disasters, therefore the UK and the USA hurry to do something to placate Pakistan, regardless of what is proper and what is not. Needless to say this will lead them into greater tangles. Basically, this seems to have little to do with Kashmir and is a result of wider world policies. The UK has long nursed some kind of an idea of a bloc of Islamic countries in Western Asia, of which it would like to be a kind of patron saint. It looks upon Pakistan as a natural leader of this group, which can serve as a bulwark against any expansionism on the part of the USSR. This idea of an Islamic bloc has no reality and is only a continuation of an old and out-of-date policy which had never succeeded and will not succeed in the future. Afghanistan obviously is out of it. In Iran, the UK Government has got badly entangled in the oil dispute. In the Arab countries, there is continuous ferment and mutual suspicion.

21. Our relations with Pakistan continue to be bad. The Pakistan Press sets up new records in inflammatory writing and calls for *jehad* against India. The UN Security Council shuts its ears and eyes to all this writing and speech in Pakistan. But it pricks up its ears when somebody draws its attention to the Constituent Assembly in Kashmir.

22. A recent significant development in Pakistan has been the formation of what is called the Hindustan Hamara Party,¹¹ which openly aims at the conquest of India. We need not worry too much about this except as indicating the general mood and policy of some people in Pakistan. No doubt it is the opposite number of the Hindu Mahasabha in India, which also claims to get back Pakistan and unite it with India. This development in Pakistan indicates how one false step leads to another. The Hindu Mahasabha, never noted for much good sense, continues to think and act in a manner which can only surprise intelligent people. But even lack of intelligence can give trouble and

11. At Karachi on 3 May 1951.

can exploit people's passions. The Hindu Mahasabha is not going to conquer Pakistan and the Hindustan Hamara Party will never get an inch of Indian territory. But between the two, they will raise passions and bitterness and that is the danger of the situation.

23. We have recently appointed Dr Mohan Sinha Mehta as our High Commissioner in Pakistan.¹² Dr Mehta has been functioning as our Ambassador at The Hague. We have chosen him for Pakistan because we attach great importance to our High Commission there and Dr Mehta has proved himself to be a man of great tact, ability and understanding.

24. In Nepal, the general situation has not been very good and there has been plenty of little trouble in various parts of the country. In Birganj there was some rioting and looting of Indian shops.¹³ We have made it clear to the Nepal Government that this kind of thing must stop. At our request, a Commission of Enquiry is being nominated and one of our officers will be a member of this commission. It is possible that I might visit Kathmandu in the course of this month, after Parliament is over.

25. An announcement has recently been made of an agreement between China and Tibet.¹⁴ This agreement is more or less what one might have expected in the circumstances. Tibet retains her internal autonomy in a large measure, but China's ultimate control will be very obvious. We do not quite know yet what the position of our agent or our missions there will be. It is possible that they might continue, though they can hardly do so as they did in the past.

26. A new popular Ministry has been formed in Pepsu. This Ministry will have to face very grave problems, one of the gravest being the organised hostility of the Akalis. Master Tara Singh, after a relatively quiet period, is again coming out as a preacher of trouble and conflict.

27. In Punjab, the situation has deteriorated in many ways and is at present in a curious tangle. It is unfortunate that such an important and vital province of India should waste its energy in internal political conflict.

28. In Assam, the question of the Nagas has assumed prominence again and some leaders of the Nagas have been demanding independence. They are trying to hold a plebiscite for this purpose. It is obvious that the Nagas or any other tribes on our borders cannot have independence. But we are very anxious to give them a large measure of autonomy and to help them in every way, while respecting their traditions and ways of life. I am personally an admirer of the Nagas and I like many of their fine qualities. We have sanctioned recently a special grant of Rs 10 lakhs for beneficial purposes in Nagaland. In addition, Rs 30 lakhs have been sanctioned to meet Naga claims for war damages.

12. On 24 May 1951.

13. On 26 May 1951.

14. See *ante*, p. 446.

29. Weather permitting, I intend going to Kashmir for two days, June 3rd and 4th. The Kashmir National Conference is meeting there and this will enable me to meet many of their prominent workers and will also give me a brief respite from Delhi.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

VIII

New Delhi
June 15, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

The Parliamentary session ended at last on the 9th June. As the session proceeded, work became heavier and the strain greater. There was the desire to end it as soon as possible, and yet there was very important work to be done which could not possibly be postponed. So, the leisureliness of the earlier days of the session gave place to intensive activity and Parliament sat in the morning as well as in the afternoon, till late in the evening on many occasions. The People Representation Bill had to be passed and so also the Delimitation of Constituencies, if the general elections were to be held at the end of this year. Both these measures might have taken a much longer time but for the extreme pressure on all members to finish within the allotted date. The Constitution Amendment Bill gave rise to heated and sometimes passionate debate and, I fear, tempers were frayed and hard words said. I am sorry to confess that I fell from grace on one occasion during this debate and used needlessly strong language.¹ But the strain of two weeks of that debate and listening to constant accusations and denunciations was too much for my patience.

2. It was, I think, right that Members of Parliament and the Press should be vigilant on an occasion when any of the liberties guaranteed to us by the Constitution were supposed to be in some danger. Nevertheless, I was surprised at the nature and vehemence of the attacks made which appeared to be based not so much on the wording of the Bill but rather on some fancied extension of it. The Bill was primarily intended to remove barriers to our legislation for the abolition of the zamindari system. Both from the political and the social points of view, it had become a matter of urgency and high importance that speedy effect should be given to our major policies of land reform. It was an

1. On 2 June, Nehru's use of the word "lies" was objected to as unparliamentary. Nehru then substituted the word "untruths".

old pledge, oft-repeated; it was also something that had become essential in the context of events. The amendment to Article 19 was, of course, an enabling one and phrased in somewhat wide language. But this was restricted by the word "reasonable" and thus made justiciable. Certain rather far-fetched interpretations of the Constitution by the law courts had placed grave difficulties in our way and it became necessary, therefore, to make the position clear. In doing so, there was no intention on our part to curb the freedom of the Press insofar as the expression of any opinion or any opposition was concerned. But, it was true that there had been an increasing tendency in the irresponsible sections of the Press to indulge in extreme vulgarity and defamatory writing. Politically, this might have little significance but from the point of any cultural standards, this was most distressing. It is perfectly true that standards cannot be raised by repressive legislation and that other methods have to be used for this purpose. But we live in a precarious and dangerous age and it seemed to us that the safety of the State might perhaps require that Parliament should have the power to deal with any serious situation that might arise.

3. We had to have a written Constitution. That was inevitable in the circumstances, and because we had a written Constitution, we had to have Fundamental Rights incorporated in it. Nevertheless, a rigid Constitution may well come in the way of change in a transitional age. A Constitution must be held in respect, but if it ceases to represent or comes in the way of the spirit of the age or the powerful urges of the people, then difficulties and conflicts arise. It is wise therefore to have not only stability and fixity of purpose, but also a certain flexibility and pliability in a Constitution.

4. It was not, and is not, our intention to curb the freedom of the Press and we do not want State Governments to take advantage of the new amendment in applying some obsolete law. Indeed, one of the first steps that we have to take now is to put an end to some of these obsolete laws, to which reference was frequently made in the course of the debate. None of us wants, for instance, the old sedition law to continue on the statute book. That has a bad history and evokes unpleasant memories. Positively, we shall have to consider what laws to enact which, while ensuring full freedom of expression of the Press, should help in keeping up standards and preventing the abuse of that freedom.

5. In regard to the zamindari legislation, we have to go ahead now as speedily as possible. Even so, it is desirable to take every step after full consideration and with as large a measure of cooperation as possible. We cannot, of course, permit any lack of cooperation by a section of the people to stop us from going ahead in this respect. But it will probably make for speed if we consider criticisms and, where they are valid, meet them, either by executive action or even if necessary, by some amending legislation.

6. It may be taken for granted that the general elections will take place towards the end of the year. The exact dates have not been fixed yet, but will

presumably be between November 15 and January 15. These elections are going to be a colossal affair taxing our administrative capacity to the utmost. They will tax also our forbearance and will be a test for all of us. Probably it was the shadow of these coming elections that led to the heated debates in Parliament and in the Press. Many people seem to think that our recent legislation was somehow connected with these elections. That was a completely wrong inference and certainly it never occurred to me. Indeed, there could be no greater folly for a Government, such as we are, than to use the repressive apparatus of the State to benefit any party. That itself would rouse antagonism and lose support for that party. What is far more dangerous is the attempt that some ill-disposed persons might make to create deliberate trouble during the elections. I have referred to this previously in my letters to you. Since then we have received further information that some such thing is intended and we have therefore to be prepared to meet any such anti-social challenge. Mostly it is expected from communal groups.

7. I have briefly referred, in some of my previous letters, to the confusion in Punjab. I confess that this has given us much trouble and caused much anxiety, because it appeared to us a bad symptom. The Punjab contains some of the finest human material in India and yet the tragedy of it was that this human material could not pull together. Punjab is important to us in many ways, but its importance has become much greater because now it is one of our vital frontier provinces. We could not afford to see this important area weakened by internal dissension. Every effort was made to bring about some measure of peace and harmony, but unhappily we failed. Recently, the Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress called upon the Chief Minister, Dr Gopichand Bhargava, to resign and further directed that no Congress Ministry should be formed. As I write this, no further development has taken place, but I have little doubt that the directive of the Congress Parliamentary Board will be carried out. As a consequence of this, it may become necessary to have, what is called, Governor's rule in the province. It is unfortunate that this should be so, but if circumstances compel us, we should not hesitate to do the right thing.

8. Certain recent statements made and the continuous shouting for war in Pakistan have brought the Kashmir issue into sudden and rather dangerous prominence again. I visited Srinagar at the beginning of this month² and saw for myself not only the general progress made in many directions but also the enthusiasm of the people for the National Conference there which supports the present Government. It was pleasant to see the valley looking like its old normal self again with plenty of tourists and trade flourishing. The food situation there was definitely better than in most parts of India. Rations were nearly

2. On 3 and 4 June 1951.

double than what we have given till now in the rest of India. The transport system was working efficiently. Public works have been undertaken and were progressing. There was a general air of progress. I had occasion to speak at a public meeting there and I made it clear what the policy of the Government of India was in regard to the Kashmir issue.³ Subsequently, I reiterated this at a press conference in Delhi.⁴ My statements have not pleased the Press⁵ or the leaders of Pakistan⁶ and there have been violent outbursts there. Open threats of war have been made. Our policy remains what it was, that we will not undertake any military operations in Kashmir or elsewhere unless we are attacked. As you perhaps know, we have reduced our army in the course of the last year by over 52,000 persons. That is a considerable reduction carried out at a time when the rest of the world is carrying out vast armament programmes and when Pakistan has striven with all its strength to increase its military power. Our reduction of the army to this extent was somewhat an act of faith. But there are limitations beyond which responsible statesmen cannot go, howsoever they may wish to do so. It was our desire to continue to reduce our army and thus to lessen the heavy burden of expenditure upon it. But we have been forced by circumstances to stay our hands somewhat for the present. In spite of our desire for peace, we cannot afford to take serious risks and we have to be prepared for all contingencies.

9. Recently a conference was held in Delhi between India and Pakistan for the settlement of outstanding financial questions.⁷ No substantial results were achieved and all that happened ultimately was to postpone further consideration.

10. I have recently spoken at some length at a press conference about the food situation in India.⁸ The Food Minister has also broadcast on this subject.⁹ The Food for India Bill has been passed by the US Congress and will probably receive the President's assent in a day or two. The general position is certainly better than it has been and, as I have stated previously, we can say with assurance that there will be no famine, as was feared. We have rushed vast quantities of foodgrains to Bihar and the Bihar Government has functioned with efficiency in distributing them, in opening many thousands of fair price shops, in promoting public works so as to add to the purchasing power, and in distributing free food. Madras was the second dangerous area and we propose

3. See *ante*, pp. 383-393.

4. On 11 June 1951.

5. See *ante*, pp. 394-397.

6. On 13 June 1951, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan accused India of deliberately obstructing progress on peaceful lines of the Kashmir issue.

7. From 25 to 29 May 1951.

8. On 11 June 1951.

9. On 12 June 1951.

to tackle it in the same way. While danger of some terrible disaster happening has passed, another danger still confronts us and that is the growth of complacency. The situation will continue to be difficult and will require our utmost vigilance and hard work. It is not enough for us just to prevent large-scale deaths by starvation. We have to build up these great areas in Bihar and Madras and elsewhere and give back strength to those who have been undernourished for a long time and hope to those who have been on the threshold of despair. Food, now and always, is the primary problem. Nothing else can be given higher priority and it is primarily by the way we deal with the food problem that we will be judged. In this matter, more than ever, cooperation of all the States and the Centre is necessary. The Food Minister has recently announced the restoration of the cut in the food ration.¹⁰ We have done so after due thought and we shall try to make good any deficiency in any State. It was a matter of great distress to us to cut down rations to below nourishment level. This forced many people to go to the black market and this was not only an encouragement of black marketing but a severe strain on their slender resources. The restoration of the cut, therefore, from every point of view, is to be welcomed.

11. The response made by the public to my appeal for free food for Bihar and Madras appears to be good from newspaper reports. But we do not receive direct reports, as we should, from each district. It is important that District Magistrates, when reporting to their Governments, should inform the Centre at the same time. Generally speaking, it might not be advantageous to send the actual foodgrains collected either to Bihar or Madras. Where this can be easily done, they may be sent. But where distances are great, transport difficulties will arise and money will be wasted on freight. It is better in such cases to send the cash value of the grain collected. Out of this, other grains will be purchased on the spot and distributed freely in the name of the donors. These cash contributions should be sent to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

12. I have recently appointed¹¹ two Parliamentary Secretaries, Shri Satish Chandra¹² and Shri Shyam Nandan Mishra.¹³ They will function under me and will work in an honorary capacity. I think it is desirable, not only at the Centre but in the States, to have honorary Parliamentary Secretaries who can help in the work of Government and at the same time gain some training and insight.

10. On 12 June 1951.

11. On 11 June 1951.

12. (1917-1990); Congressman from UP; Member, Indian Constituent Assembly, 1948-50, Provisional Parliament, 1950-52, Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister, 1951-52; Member, Lok Sabha, 1952-57, 1957-62, and 1971-77.

13. (b. 1920); Congressman from Bihar; Member, Provisional Parliament, 1950-52; Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, 1951-52; Member, Lok Sabha, 1952-62 and 1971-79 and Rajya Sabha, 1962-71; Minister of External Affairs in Janata Government, 1979-80.

13. Recently certain variations have been announced in our cotton policy.¹⁴ I confess to you that it was not without serious thought and misgiving that we agreed to these variations. We agreed to them on the clearest assurance and understanding that they will not be allowed to affect textile prices. It has been our definite policy not to do anything which might, directly or indirectly, raise prices. And yet, under stress of circumstances, some steps have been taken in the past which had that effect. I think that we made a mistake then. It is impossible to have any plan or any progress if prices are rising. We get into a vicious spiral out of which it is difficult to emerge. We shall soon have to consider the Planning Commission's report and I have no doubt that this will lay the greatest stress on a price policy which must be adhered to. Otherwise their schemes might well fail.

14. Another recent announcement¹⁵ has been an increase of Rs 5/- in the dearness allowance to be paid to Government servants drawing Rs 250/- or less pay per month. There is no doubt that such an increase can be justified and is deserved, and yet it has unfortunate and far-reaching consequences. We gave a great deal of earnest thought to this matter and ultimately decided that, in the balance, it was desirable.

15. There has been much talk recently of inner conflicts in the Congress and of defections from it. That is, of course, a matter of interest and concern to all Congressmen. But it must concern others also because of its large consequences. At a meeting of the Working Committee held a few days ago, it was decided to convene a meeting of the All India Congress Committee on the 13th of July at Bangalore. This will be preceded by a Working Committee meeting. These meetings have not been convened just to consider the internal situation in the Congress, though that has some importance. They have been convened for a much wider purpose, so that full and earnest thought might be given to the state of the country and the problems that face us. It has been unfortunate that no such constructive thought has been given to the overall picture by the Congress organization. We meet and pass old resolutions and then go back to our homes. And yet the course of India's recent history has placed a responsibility on the Congress which cannot be shirked. Therefore, the Bangalore meetings have a vital significance not only for the future of the Congress but also of the country. They might involve a stock-taking of the past and important policy decisions for the future. As a Government, we cannot talk in an airy manner about future policies, such as opposition groups often do. We have to be realistic without, I hope, ceasing to be idealistic.

14. The Government announced on 13 June 1951 an increase in the basic ceiling price of cotton chiefly to help cultivators get a better price for their existing stocks. Fixation of price and quality checks were intended to help increase the production and improve the quality of cotton.

15. On 12 June 1951.

16. There has been a very unfortunate development in Indian politics in recent months. More and more public discussions relate to criticisms and denunciations, often personal. Very seldom is any constructive proposal put forward. If this development is not checked, we shall all sink to the level of personal abuse and political problems will not be properly debated, as they should be, in a democracy. I hope that the coming session of the AICC will raise our level higher in this respect and deal with our major problems in an objective and dispassionate way.

17. I need not write to you about the situation in Korea. In a military sense, the United Nations have won some victories.¹⁶ There is much talk of a ceasefire, but I fear there is little hope for it at present and even the military victories do not help in this respect. The conflicts have become deeper as time has gone on. They began with Korea, they included in their scope Formosa, which became even more important, in a sense, than Korea, and now the question of a Japanese peace treaty is likely to make yet another issue a vital one in the Far East.

18. I am going to Nepal tomorrow on a three-day visit,¹⁷ my first to this mountain country, which is our close neighbour. From Nepal I hope to pay a brief visit to Bihar, more especially to some of the scarcity areas there.¹⁸

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. The UN forces were able to recross the 38th parallel at several places without much resistance. Despite resumption of their offensive on 16 May the Chinese and the North Korean forces could not achieve any significant success.

17. From 16 to 18 June 1951.

18. On 19 June 1951.

IX

New Delhi
June 25, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,

My next fortnightly letter to you is likely to be held up as I am going away to Kashmir early tomorrow morning. I shall be in the high mountains, away from Srinagar and cut off from normal communications for a number of days. I return to Delhi on July 4th forenoon. That very day I shall be seeing Mr Frank Graham, the UN Representative, on the question of Kashmir.

On the 8th I propose to go to Mysore and Bangalore for the Working Committee and AICC meetings. I may address you between the 4th and the

8th. But my letter then is likely to be brief. Hence my desire to write to you now. I shall not deal in this letter with the many problems to which I usually refer in my fortnightly communications. Important developments might take place in the Far-Eastern war in Korea as a consequence of a Soviet statement made two days ago.¹ But it is not clear yet what the result of all this will be. Then, Mr Graham's visit brings the question of Kashmir to the very forefront and meanwhile Pakistan is adopting its usual tactics of bullying and threatening. The situation vis-a-vis Pakistan is grave.

The meetings of the Working Committee and the AICC in Bangalore have a special significance. They are something more than merely party meetings, because they are likely to influence the country's policy in regard to some matters.

This morning's newspapers contain reports of a resolution passed by the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference in Bombay.² Quite apart from the merits of the question, it seems to me that the whole approach has been vitiated by excitement, passion and a certain degree of hysteria. It would be better for us to await events and not to say or do anything which might complicate the situation any further. It is clear to me that we cannot accept the main contention of the Conference, that is, have another amendment or re-amendment of the Constitution, according to their wishes.³ That is not even physically possible for us. For my part, I think I am as anxious as anyone to preserve freedom of the Press and of expression. Any person who reads the newspapers today or reports of some speeches will observe the tremendous latitude that is given to them. To say that we are suppressing the Press seems to me to say something which has no basis in fact. As for the fear of future suppression, this can be guarded against when any such attempt is made. We have no desire to make that attempt insofar as the political sphere is concerned.

I am sending you separately a copy of Shri Gorwala's Report to the Planning Commission.⁴ This report is a thought-provoking document. One may not agree

1. Proposals for a settlement of the Korean conflict through negotiation of a ceasefire by the belligerents followed by an armistice and the mutual withdrawal of troops from the 38th parallel were made on 23 June 1951 by M. Yakov Malik, the Soviet representative at the United Nations.
2. The Conference resolved to suspend the working of all its committees with the Government in any capacity at the Centre and in the States and decided on non-publication of newspapers on 12 July to protest against the proposed amendment Bill.
3. The Conference wanted to secure repeal of the amendment to Article 19(2) of the Constitution and restoration of freedom of expression.
4. The Report submitted by A.D. Gorwala on 28 July 1951 emphasised that while great stress be laid on efficiency and integrity of the public servants, some basic structural changes be made to improve the quality of service and to ensure speed, effectiveness and accountability. The Report also suggested recruitment through Public Service Commissions to reduce nepotism and patronage and arrangements for training of service personnel.

with some of his suggestions or opinions, but there is a good deal in it which requires careful consideration. He refers, in particular, to the innumerable charges brought against individual Ministers or officers or departments of Government in newspapers. There is constant talk of "scandals" in Government. A very great deal of this is completely without foundation. Some of it has some basis in fact. A habit has grown in Government departments that these charges can be ignored, because they are generally frivolous or because they are made in irresponsible sheets. This attitude is neither correct nor wise. The allegations are widely read and often believed, because of lack of refutation. Therefore, whenever any such charge is made there should be an immediate enquiry in the department concerned, and a clear statement of facts issued. Where there is an error, it should be acknowledged, and set right.

It is also necessary that where defamatory statements are made against Ministers or officers of Government, legal action should be taken. It is not proper to ignore such allegations. It is that any action for defamation is a difficult affair and often drags on for some time. This inconvenience has to be faced.

I would, therefore, particularly draw your attention to these matters and request that suitable action should be taken whenever any occasion arises, both in regard to enquiries and public statements and actions for defamation.

We are passing through hard and difficult times both in the world at large and in our own country. We cannot do much in the world, except to wait on events. In India we have obviously a particular responsibility. The situation here, in some ways, has deteriorated. We must come to grips with it by frank and straightforward dealings with the public.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10

MISCELLANEOUS

I. Strikes

(i) The Postmen's Strike

1. To Jayaprakash Narayan¹

New Delhi
March 31, 1951

My dear Jayaprakash,²

I have received your letter of March 24th.³ I have carefully read it as well as the letter you wrote to Rafi Ahmed Kidwai dated February 8th, copy of which you have sent me.

I must confess to a feeling of distress at my complete inability to understand the viewpoint you have urged. I have not been directly connected with this matter of strike period pay. But it has come up before me on numerous occasions. Indeed, even before we came into Government, I was interested in the strike and I visited at least one strike centre and met the striking postmen. I think this was in Banaras, though I am not sure. I am mentioning this to indicate that I have been in touch with this matter right from the beginning, that is July 1946.⁴ I was not directly concerned with the negotiations at any period. But, because of my interest in the matter, I kept in touch. Right from the very beginning, it seemed to me that the demand for strike period pay was not justified. It was an abnormal demand and such demands, so far as I know, have been very rarely made. Therefore, at every stage where I came in, I indicated that the demand was not justifiable. That was the opinion of the then Members of Government as well as of all those who have had to deal with it later. I shall not go into the reasons for this, as they have been before you on many previous occasions. On one occasion, you will remember coming to see me with some of the leaders of the Postmen's Union. Even then I explained this to you, I think, quite frankly and clearly. There has not been at any time in my mind or, to my knowledge, in anyone else's mind, any doubt about this point.

You refer to some statement being made by Rafi Ahmed Kidwai to the effect that some other way might be found, such as treating the period as leave period. It is quite possible that some such statement was made in the course of a conversation to you, as Rafi Ahmed was no doubt anxious to please you

1. File No 26(63)/48-PMS.
2. Jayaprakash Narayan was President of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation at this time.
3. Jayaprakash Narayan wrote to Nehru that because of the Government's failure to fulfil a promise that had been made by a Minister of the Central Government to a trade union, he had decided to undertake a fast in order to persuade the Government to honour their promises. He had already written to Rafi Ahmed Kidwai about the matter, but had failed to get any positive reply. In the event of a negative answer from Nehru, he would have to undertake the fast, although in principle, he was opposed to that method being applied to a trade union dispute.
4. The strike which started on 11 July ended on 11 August 1946. See *Selected Works* (First Series), Vol 15, pp. 627-628.

and find a way out. You also refer to various other statements made by Shri Mangaldas Pakvasa, Sardar Patel and Shri N.V. Gadgil. All these statements, according to your own account, were vague suggestions which might be explored. Oddly enough, our very desire to go as far as possible to meet your wishes has been turned round and is now used against us. At no time was there anything that could be construed as an assurance, much less a decision.

We have considered this matter on many occasions and we have felt honestly convinced that any direct or indirect way of paying a strike period pay would not only be unjustified in itself but would have other rather serious consequences. I should have thought that you would appreciate the very earnest attempts we have made in this matter to meet you as far as possible and that you would understand, if you did not wholly agree, the reasons for our decision. I am therefore all the more surprised and distressed at what you have written.

You call this a moral issue for yourself. It would be equally possible for me to say that it is a moral issue for others concerned. Certainly it is a moral issue, in such a matter, to hold up the possibility of a fast to compel acceptance of something which has been so earnestly examined and rejected. I do not wish to speak as a member of Government, but I can hardly conceive of any Government being carried on, if its decisions were made in this way. You refer to a previous incident when you made a like suggestion in another matter. I remember that incident.⁵ We decided more or less in accordance with your wishes. I am free to confess that that decision was partly influenced at least by the fact that you felt strongly about it. Nevertheless the decision was chiefly on the merits. In the present case I see no merits at all and wrong consequences. I just do not see how we can upset a policy and a line of action which we have consistently adopted for over four years, more especially as I am convinced that that policy was a right one. If I went against my own positive judgement in this matter under these circumstances, I feel that I would be definitely guilty of a lack of integrity.

Much has happened during the last four years and both nationally and internationally we live in times of deep crisis. It may be, in your opinion, that we are ourselves partly responsible for the situation that we have to face. That does not lessen the crisis or the problems that confront us. We have to view everything, therefore, from this point of view. Whatever we might have decided three or four years ago, even if we chose to do so then, is far more difficult from every point of view now. If then we decided against something, much more must we adhere to that decision today. Anything else, it seems to me, would be a complete abandonment of our own judgement and responsibility.

5. In his letter to Kidwai on 8 February 1951, Jayaprakash Narayan referred to a previous incident where the striking policemen in UP were treated as on leave and paid for the period of strike.

I hope you will give serious thought to what I have written. I have not written this as Prime Minister, but as an old colleague of yours who has had and still has great affection for you.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

2. To Jayaprakash Narayan¹

New Delhi
April 21, 1951

My dear Jayaprakash,
I have your letter of April 18th.²

As my views are not relevant, we can leave them out of consideration.

During all these discussions in the course of the last two years or so, frequent references have been made to me. At no time did I gather that any kind of an assurance, except an assurance that the matter would be explored thoroughly to find a way out, was given. It may be that there was a misunderstanding in your mind. The least I could expect is that you should accept our word for it.

I am sorry I cannot understand on any principle where a fast comes in.³

Regarding your letter of March 24th, all I can do is to refer it to the Ministries concerned. I entirely agree with you that labour is experiencing difficulties. I would very much like to alleviate them, if I had the power and the resources to do so. Unfortunately my capacity is limited.

Do you wish me to make an announcement now which might create false hopes and then give rise to misunderstanding such as in the case of the strike pay for the postmen?

I function to the best of my ability and capacity. I can do no more.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. File No 26(63)/48-PMS.
2. Jayaprakash Narayan accused Kidwai of giving him a false assurance that he would solve the problem of payment of pay of the postmen during the strike period. He added that a definite assurance should have been given by the Government and anyone's personal view had no relevance since the matter was between the Government and the trade union.
3. Jayaprakash Narayan addressing the postmen in Delhi on 14 July 1951 admitted his failure in not having succeeded in getting them the wages for the period of their strike in 1946. He added that as he had been guilty of not properly understanding the promise made by Kidwai on the question, he would atone for it by undertaking a fast as soon as possible.

3. To Jayaprakash Narayan¹

New Delhi
May 18, 1951

My dear Jayaprakash,

I have received your letter of the 16th May.²

There is no question of my being annoyed. I have, I hope, passed that stage. But I think it is true, what you say, that I am completely unable to understand your point of view in this matter, as presumably you have been unable to understand my point of view. I have carefully gone through the correspondence with you on this subject naturally with a desire to understand and meet your viewpoint as far as I could. I have failed to do so.³

I am sending a copy of your letter to Rafi Ahmed Kidwai.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. File No 26(63)/48-PMS.
2. He had specifically written that if the assurance given to him by Kidwai with regard to the strike period pay issue was not fulfilled, or definite undertaking was not given by Government to fulfil it, in a month's time, "I shall undertake an indefinite fast."
3. He went on a fast for three weeks from 22 June 1952 at a nature cure clinic in Pune and on 18 July the Government agreed to pay emoluments to postal employees for the period of the strike.

4. To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai¹

New Delhi
May 18, 1951

My dear Rafi,

I enclose a copy of a letter from Jayaprakash. Also copy of a brief reply. I can do nothing in this matter and I am quite sure that Jayaprakash is acting very wrongly and foolishly.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. File No 26(63)/48-PMS.

10

MISCELLANEOUS

I. Strikes

(ii) Punjab National Bank Strike

1. To Jagjivan Ram¹

New Delhi
May 7, 1951

My dear Jagjivan Ram,²

Your letter of the 7th May about the Punjab National Bank strike.³ The matter appears to be rather complicated. But it does seem from your letter that the strike was not obviously frivolous. The argument that when a strike has been broken, we should allow the employers to take full advantage of this does not appeal to me. Indeed it is not a very sound argument, if we are to proceed on the basis of more or less cooperative relations between the employers and employees. A Government cannot side with either in order to crush or suppress the other.

The main point is whether there was a *prima facie* case in favour of the employees and whether they acted on the whole in a constitutional way.

I understand that there are or were some people behind this strike who were bent on mischief. Even so, we cannot ignore others who might have been led away.

It is difficult for me to give any advice without a much closer study of this case. I have received a letter from Deshmukh⁴ also in which he has suggested conciliation proceedings with immediate effect in order to clear up certain points. I am not myself acquainted fully with the various proceedings that might be followed in such a case. You suggest reference to a tribunal. I suggest that you might discuss this matter with the Finance Minister and arrive at some kind of an agreement as to the procedure to be followed.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No 26(104)/51-PMS.
2. He was the Union Minister for Labour at this time.
3. The employees were demanding Government intervention in a dispute between the employees and the management of the Bank.
4. C.D. Deshmukh was the Union Minister for Finance at this time.

2. To Jagjivan Ram¹

New Delhi
May 8, 1951

My dear Jagjivan Ram,

I enclose a letter I have received from the Punjab National Bank employees.²

I understand that you are in touch with Deshmukh. I think this matter should be settled as soon as possible. If my help is required, I shall gladly give it.

It seems to me that the issues have been narrowed down very greatly and the dispute concerns a relatively small number of strikers.

Obviously I cannot become an arbitrator as suggested in this letter. But I can perhaps help.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No 26(104)/51-PMS.
2. It contained a demand for the award of the Industrial Tribunal on the Bank dispute.

3. To C.D. Deshmukh¹

New Delhi
May 8, 1951

My dear Deshmukh,

All day today several hundreds of these Punjab National Bank employees have been besieging my house. In the evening they sent me the enclosed letter. You will notice that they have asked me to arbitrate and expressed their willingness to abide by my decision. I cannot possibly take up this arbitration. I neither have the time nor do I think it will be proper for me to do so. But if I can help, I shall certainly do so.

I think the sooner these people go back to work, the better. Perhaps all of them, excepting the few whose cases are in dispute, can be taken back immediately. About the others it might be said that their cases will be considered separately.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No 26(104)/51-PMS.

MISCELLANEOUS

I. Strikes

(iii) Handloom Weavers Strike

1. To Ravi Shankar Shukla¹

New Delhi
May 13, 1951

My dear Shuklaji,²

...I also agree with you that it must be embarrassing to a State Government for a Central Minister to interfere in any way with their arrangements or their local policies. I think Mahtab overstepped the mark in doing so.

At the same time I confess I have a strong feeling that your Government dealt with the situation much too harshly and not as a popular Government should do. You mention that the agitation was fast petering out because of the repressive measures that had been taken and that Mahtab's visit put a new life into it and raised the morale of the strikers and the various groups connected with them. I accept this analysis. I have no doubt that while the grievances of the handloom weavers were perfectly genuine, some political groups and individuals exploited them for their own purposes. How are we to meet such a situation? Mere repression on a large scale is seldom a wise or an effective policy to adopt. It may succeed in breaking the strike and in punishing some mischief-makers. It also results in the misery of large numbers of innocent people and it leaves behind a trail of bitterness and discontent, which no popular Government can afford to have. Even in a strike which is led by wrong persons and for wrong purposes, the great majority of strikers are poor folk, who are exploited or misled or who strike because of their suffering not knowing what else to do. For us to treat them as enemies and try to crush them is to treat large numbers of our own people in the wrong way. Our object should be not only to meet their legitimate grievances but also to make them realise that we are trying our best to do so.

Suppose such a strike had happened in British times, what would our reaction have been to these events—to lathi charges and large-scale arrests and summary convictions, I am quite sure that we would have protested vigorously. The fact that a national Government is functioning should normally make people hesitate to strike because they ought to be in a position to influence it in other ways. But if they are unable to influence it or if they are misled into a strike, what is that national Government to do? It has to maintain law and order and at the same time it has to win over those people and not merely coerce and frighten them into submission. It has to try to separate the large mass from a group or leaders of mischief-makers.

1. H.K. Mahtab Papers, NMML. Extracts.

2. Shukla was Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh at this time.

My own impression is that the Madhya Pradesh Government took needlessly strong action.³ I am told that 1653 persons were arrested in the course of this agitation. Nearly all of them were tried and convicted on the same day that they were arrested. Those apologising later were released. Fines were realised immediately. Processions were dispersed by force.

All this sounds rather odd when we are told that the strike was of handloom weavers who, it is well-known, were considerably distressed. It is odd even though the fact may be that mischief-makers took advantage of this situation for their own political or personal reasons. As a consequence, most of these unhappy handloom weavers must have grown bitter against the Government. I see little difference between this treatment and the treatment that the British gave even to our satyagrahis. The satyagrahis challenged the whole fabric of the British Government. The poor handloom weavers made no such challenge.

The whole matter depends upon how we approach it. I am quite certain that if such a strike took place in England, even though it was led by communists and the like, the Government there would never function in this way. Members or representatives of Government would have gone straight to the strikers and talked to them and reasoned with them. They might even have addressed meetings convened by the strikers.

I am sorry that Mahtab took certain steps without informing you and in fact against your advice. Undoubtedly this was wrong. Nevertheless I think that your advice in regard to the public meeting which he addressed on the 9th April was unwise. Whatever the reason, when a large number of people, estimated at 50,000 gathered together, it is unwise not to take the opportunity to address them and explain the position. The whole question is whether we wish to make an appeal to their minds and hearts or merely to frighten them into submission. I think we should always adopt the former course wherever it is possible to do so.

My own feeling for some time past has been that there is far too great a tendency in some of our State Governments to resort to coercive processes and not to think so much of more peaceful approaches. I regret this tendency because it is bad in itself and it produces unfortunate results.

I should imagine that Mahtab's address to this vast crowd must have produced a salutary effect. In the report that you have sent me, you mention the names of some well-known Congressmen, who apparently were sympathising with this agitation. Some of these met Mahtab and induced him to attend the

3. Due to restrictions on import of Indian handloom cloth by the neighbouring countries in 1949 and the shortage of yarn caused by the cessation of trade between India and Pakistan in 1950, the Indian weavers were in great distress and in Nagpur about two thousand weavers courted arrest in 1951 while demonstrating against non-availability of yarn.

meeting. Among these was Dr Punjabrao Deshmukh, one of our colleagues in Parliament. As I have said above, Mahtab should not have agreed to any programme, more especially of addressing a public meeting without your advice and consent. Nevertheless it is embarrassing and difficult to be faced with a situation such as Mahtab had to face. His own colleagues in Parliament were pressing him to address a meeting and a vast crowd was waiting for him. Whatever his decision, it would have been partly wrong.

I gather that a very large number of persons arrested were released soon after. Some however apparently are still in prison. I think it would be a wise step for your Government to release those who are still in prison. One of these is a Congress MLA. The fact that the legitimate grievances of weavers were exploited by some political opponents should not lead us to pursue a policy which alienates popular sympathy.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mahtab as well as to Rajaji.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To Ravi Shankar Shukla¹

New Delhi
June 23, 1951

My dear Shuklaji,

We have had some correspondence about the handloom weavers, their strike and its subsequent development when Mahtab went to Nagpur.² I wrote to you then that Mahtab's intervention was strictly not proper. But it seemed to me that, from a larger point of view, his action could be justified and was a wise one.³ I do not like the use of the police or the other coercive apparatus of the State against common folk, especially people like the handloom weavers, who were obviously suffering from lack of yarn and for other reasons.

They are greatly troubled about this lack of yarn and I am making every effort to remedy this lack.

1. H.K. Mahtab Papers, NMML.
2. See the preceding item.
3. The Madhya Pradesh Government had taken recourse to repressive measures to put down the handloom weavers' strike and H.K. Mahtab had at that time visited Nagpur unofficially without prior information to the State Government, and at the request of some of his colleagues in Parliament had addressed a large public meeting.

Meanwhile I have had a visit from Shri R.B. Kumbhare, MLA and President of the MP Provincial Weavers' Congress. He has given me a representation which I enclose. I know that Kumbhare was one of the leading spirits in the recent strike and that your Government did not approve of his activities at all. You may be right insofar as his activities are concerned. But we have to consider the matter not from the individual point of view, but from the point of view of the large body of the weavers who are fine craftsmen and should be encouraged in every way.

The note attached says that the persons who participated in the strike or the satyagraha are being penalised and are given far less yarn than others. In fact, the difference, according to this note, is tremendous; on the one hand an average of 3 to 4 lbs per registered weaver and on the other hand 90 lbs per head. If there is any truth in this charge, then it requires immediate looking into and correction. We cannot show such partiality and be charged with patent injustice.

I hope that you will be good enough to look into this matter very soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10

MISCELLANEOUS

I. Strikes

(iv) Railwaymen's Strike

1. To V.V. Giri¹

New Delhi
24 June 1951

My dear Giri,²

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 13th June. I was away for many days in Nepal and Bihar.

I need not tell you how concerned I am about the Railwaymen's dispute and the possibility of a strike. I can tell you that we have given the most earnest consideration to this matter and I have myself joined in several conferences with other Ministers. You know all the facts and so I need not repeat them.

If I could do anything, I would gladly do so. But I do not see exactly what I can do in the circumstances. After full consideration, we have done our utmost by adding Rs 5/- to the dearness allowance. This means a great burden not only on the Central Government but also on all provincial Governments, who are complaining bitterly. All our hopes of future progress are undermined by our present commitments.

You must have noticed that Jayaprakash has been speaking in angry tones about me, criticising and condemning me in strong language. I do not mind that. But I do feel a little sad about it. I have never said a word in public or private against Jayaprakash, except sometimes to say in private that his criticism is negative and not positive. I do not wish to enter into any controversy with old colleagues.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

2. He was at this time the High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka and was one of the founder-members of the All India Railwaymen's Federation.

10

MISCELLANEOUS

II. Somnath Temple

1. To C. Rajagopalachari¹

New Delhi
March 11, 1951

My dear Rajaji,

The President wrote to me about his proposed visit to Saurashtra and said that he had been invited to inaugurate the Somnath temple after the recent repairs and additions to it. He himself wished to accept this invitation and asked for my reactions.² I wrote to him that while there was obviously no objection to his visiting this temple or any other temple or other places of worship normally, on this particular occasion the inauguration of the temple would have a certain significance and certain implications.³ Therefore, for my part, I would have preferred if he did not associate himself in this way.

I have now received his reply, a copy of which I enclose. As the President is anxious to associate himself with this function, I do not know whether it is desirable for me to insist that he should not do so. I propose, therefore, subject to your advice, to tell him that he can exercise his own discretion in the matter, although I still think that it would be better for him not to go there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.
2. On 2 March 1951, Rajendra Prasad informed Nehru that the Jam Saheb in his capacity as Chairman of the Board of Trustees had invited him to preside over the function and he personally did not see any objection to associating himself with the function as he had never "ceased visiting temples" of various religious faiths.
3. See *ante*, p. 270.

2. To Rajendra Prasad¹

New Delhi
March 13, 1951

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 10th March regarding your visit to Somnath temple.² I have already conveyed my reactions to this.

1. File No 59/51, President's Secretariat.
2. Rajendra Prasad wrote to Nehru on 10 March 1951 that the Somnath temple had been built entirely with private subscriptions and he was not doing anything extraordinary if he associated himself with the function, as he visited other places of worship whenever he felt inclined to do so. Moreover, he did not feel it right to refuse the invitation because the Somnath temple had much historic significance and the invitation came from the Rajpramukh of the State, who was also the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

But if you feel that it will not be right for you to refuse the invitation, I would not like to press my point any further.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To K.M. Panikkar¹

New Delhi
17 April 1951

My dear Panikkar,

...I entirely agree with what you have written about the Somnath temple business. The whole thing is fantastic. I have in fact said so to the President and to Mr Munshi who is the chief patron and organiser. Indeed I asked the President not to associate himself with this. But he had already agreed and it was difficult for me to come in his way at this late stage. I have tried therefore to tone down the effects of his visit and what he is going to do there....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection. Extracts.

4. To C. Rajagopalachari¹

New Delhi
April 17, 1951

My dear Rajaji,

I enclose copy of a letter from Panikkar. Also a note he has sent about the Communist Party of Burma.

I should like to draw your special attention to what he has written about the Somnath temple business. I am very much troubled about this, and yet I do not know what I can do. In any event it is amazing for people to write to our Embassies for the waters of the rivers there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. JN Collection.

5. Somnath Temple¹

I have sent a copy of Panikkar's letter of the 21st March to Mr Rajagopalachari.

I have also written to Mr Munshi about the Somnath temple.² It is fantastic that our Embassies should be addressed in this way and asked to collect the waters of distant rivers and twigs from various mountains. I mentioned to the President sometime ago that I did not fancy his visiting the Somnath temple on this occasion. He said he had promised to do so and it was difficult for him to get out of his promise. There is nothing more to be done about it. But I have made it clear both to the President and to Mr Munshi that I do not at all like these activities.

Does External Affairs know anything about these letters addressed to our Embassies abroad asking for the waters of various rivers? I think you might write to our Embassies not to pay the slightest attention to these appeals....

1. Note to Secretary-General and Foreign Secretary, MEA, 17 April 1951. JN Collection. Extracts.
2. See the following item.

6. To K.M. Munshi¹

New Delhi
April 17, 1951

My dear Munshi,

Our Ambassador in Peking writes to me that he has received a letter from the trustees of the Somnath temple asking the Embassy to collect and send waters from the Hoang Ho, the Yangtse and the Pearl rivers and also some twigs from the Tien Shan mountains. It was stated that this was necessary for the reconsecration of the Somnath temple. This letter has rather upset our Embassy and I am myself equally upset at the thought that such letters have been sent to our Embassies abroad. It would not have mattered so much (although even that would have been undesirable) if some private individual had made this request. But the request coming from persons connected with the Government and with the President's name mentioned is most embarrassing for us abroad.

1. JN Collection.

I fear there is no realisation here of how other people react to some of our ways of thinking and action.

Apart from this, I just do not understand how the waters of the rivers of China are going to be transported to India. I am very much troubled over this business.

Could you please let me know to what Embassies or other missions abroad this appeal has been made for the waters of rivers or anything else. I shall have to write to them about it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Liaquat Ali Khan¹

New Delhi
April 21, 1951

My dear Nawabzada,

I do not normally draw your attention to broadcasts of Radio Pakistan (Peshawar). But I have previously mentioned to you that these broadcasts, especially in the Pushto language, are extraordinarily virulent and often contain entirely false allegations.

A recent broadcast from Peshawar in Pushto on the 17th April is an example of extreme irresponsibility and falsehood. I shall be grateful if you will consider this.²

The story of the gates of Somnath temple being brought back to India from Afghanistan is completely false and there is not an atom of truth in it. This has been publicly denied. In fact nobody knows if there are any such gates anywhere and nothing of the kind is being sent from Afghanistan to India. Nevertheless, the Pakistan Press has been full of this story.

I leave it to you to judge how far the broadcast, a report of which I am enclosing, is decent or desirable from any point of view.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

2. The broadcast on 17 April 1951 announced that the independent tribes from Quetta to Chitral numbering about 33 lakhs had decided to prevent the Kabul Government from returning to India, at the instance of the Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Shah Mahmood Khan, the portals of the Somnath temple, which had been carried by Mahmud of Ghazni with him as a mark of victory achieved by Islam.

8. To U.N. Dhebar¹

New Delhi
April 21, 1951

My dear Chief Minister,²

I have seen an item of news in the papers to the effect that the Saurashtra Government has sanctioned a sum of Rs 5 lakhs for the installation ceremony of the Somnath temple. I was much surprised to read this and I should like to know if this is correct. Whatever the importance of the Somnath temple might be, this is not a governmental matter and it is for private individuals to collect money for it. I doubt if it is a proper use of public funds held by Governments to be spent in this way.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

2. Dhebar was at this time the Chief Minister of Saurashtra.

9. To Rajendra Prasad¹

New Delhi
April 22, 1951

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am greatly worried about the Somnath affair. As I feared, it is assuming a certain political importance. Indeed references have been made to it internationally also. In criticism of our policy in regard to it, we are asked how a secular Government such as ours can associate itself with such a ceremony which is, in addition, revivalist in character. Questions are being put to me in Parliament and I am replying to them saying that Government has nothing to do with it and those persons who are connected in any way are functioning entirely in their personal capacity.

The Jam Saheb who is, I believe, the Chairman of the Somnath trustees, did a very rash thing in sending some kind of a circular letter to our various Embassies abroad and asked them to collect waters and soil from different countries for the Somnath installation. The Jam Saheb happens also to be the Rajpramukh and it is a little difficult to distinguish between these different capacities. Some of our Embassies have been put in a difficult position and

1. JN Collection.

have protested strongly to us. Some foreign Embassies have also wondered what all this was about.

According to newspaper reports, the Saurashtra Government has set aside Rs 5 lakhs for these Somnath installation ceremonies. This seems to me completely improper for any Government to do and I have written to that Government accordingly. At any time this would have been undesirable, but at the present juncture, when starvation stalks the land and every kind of national economy and austerity are preached by us, this expenditure by a Government appears to me to be almost shocking. We have stopped expenditure on education, on health and many beneficent services because we say that we cannot afford it. And yet, a State Government can spend a large sum of money on just the installation ceremony of a temple.

I do not know what to do about all this, but I must at least keep the Government of India clear of it. In answer to questions in Parliament, or perhaps in press conferences, I shall have to make this position clear.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To K.M. Munshi¹

New Delhi
April 22, 1951

My dear Munshi,

I am distressed at the impression abroad that the Somnath installation ceremony is more or less a Government affair. Questions are going to be asked in Parliament and I am going to make it clear that the Government of India has nothing to do with it. Unfortunately I cannot say the same about the Saurashtra Government which, I am surprised, is reported to have decided to spend Rs 5 lakhs over the installation ceremony. I think this is improper expenditure for a Government at any time and more especially in view of the circumstances in the country today.

I have written to the President on this subject also and to the Jam Saheb. Unfortunately, the Jam Saheb is not only the Chairman of the Trustees of Somnath temple, but also the Rajpramukh of Saurashtra. His letter to our foreign Embassies has given us a lot of trouble and created a good deal of misunderstanding.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

11. To Digvijaysinghji¹

New Delhi

April 22, 1951

My dear Jam Saheb,

I am greatly worried about this coming installation ceremony at the Somnath temple. If it was merely a private affair, it is none of my concern. But there is a widespread belief that this is a governmental affair. Some people think that the Government of India is concerned with it and certainly people believe that the Saurashtra Government is concerned. Indeed a news item in the Press stated that the Saurashtra Government is going to spend Rs 5 lakhs over this installation ceremony.

So far as the Government of India is concerned, I am going to make it perfectly clear in answer to questions in Parliament that they have nothing to do with this matter. But I can hardly say that about the Saurashtra Government, although I think their association as a Government is not proper and they should not spend Government funds on it. I have written to the Chief Minister about this also.

My real difficulty is that the President is going to the ceremony. I have pointed out to him that this might be misunderstood. But I do not wish to come in the way of his personal inclination in the matter.

I was surprised to learn the other day that you had issued some kind of a circular letter to various foreign missions of ours asking them to send waters of rivers and sometimes the soil from their respective countries. Some foreign missions have protested against this to us and pointed out that this puts them in a very false position. Anyhow an impression is created that we are moving governmentally in this matter. Your own position is not only that of Chairman of the Somnath trustees, but also that of Rajpramukh of Saurashtra. All this naturally is confusing to the foreign mind and leads them to draw certain inferences which are not really justified by the facts.

I do not quite know what I can do in the matter. But whenever occasion offers itself, I shall have to make it perfectly clear that we as a Government are not concerned with this ceremony. Pakistan of course is taking great advantage of this to try to prove that we are not a secular State. Poor Afghanistan has been dragged into the picture by a false story also.²

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

2. See *ante*, p. 606.

12. To Digvijaysinghji¹

New Delhi
April 24, 1951

My dear Jam Saheb,

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd April conveying an invitation to the ceremonies at the Somnath temple. I am afraid it is not possible for me to leave Delhi at this critical juncture for any such function.

But apart from this, I must be quite frank with you about this ceremony. Indeed I have written to you about it in another connection already. I am troubled by this revivalism and by the fact that our President and some Ministers and you as Rajpramukh are associated with it. I think that this is not in line with the nature of our State and it will have bad consequences both nationally and internationally. As individuals, of course, it is open to anyone to do what he chooses in such matters. But many of us happen to be more than private individuals and we cannot dissociate ourselves from our public capacities.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

13. To Mridula Sarabhai¹

New Delhi
April 24, 1951

My dear Mridula,²

Your letter. This business of the Somnath temple has given me much trouble and as a matter of fact, sometime ago I spoke to Rajendra Babu about it and wrote to him also. After some correspondence, I said that having put my views before him clearly, I did not wish to come in the way of his personal inclination.

1. JN Collection.

2. Daughter of Ambalal Sarabhai and ex-general secretary of the Congress; engaged in the rehabilitation of abducted refugee women after Partition.

About Saurashtra giving 5 lakhs, I rather think that the news is not quite correct. I am not sure and I am enquiring. In any event, this had nothing to do with Rajendra Babu.

It is far too late to change the President's plans now, even if he wanted to do so. I do not think it is worthwhile your writing to him. You may, if you like, see him and tell him briefly how you feel about it and about the criticism of the Gujarati Press to which you refer.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

14. To R.R. Diwakar¹

New Delhi
April 28, 1951

My dear Diwakar,

I have been rather worried about the ceremonies that are going to take place at Somnath temple. Many inquiries are addressed to me as to whether this is a governmental function or not. I have replied both in India and abroad, as well as in Parliament, that this is not a governmental function, although some Members of Government may be personally interested.²

As a matter of fact, when I heard that the President was going there, I was not happy about this, and I wrote to him accordingly. Rajaji also agreed with me. After some correspondence, I accepted the fact of the President's going there because he was anxious to do so and had already promised this. I did so somewhat reluctantly.

I think that this pompous ceremony regarding Somnath temple and any kind of governmental association is going to injure us abroad and even in India. Indeed I am getting many complaints and letters about it. Inquiries are addressed to me if this is how a secular State behaves. All I can say in reply is that this is not a governmental function.

I feel that in the circumstances our radio broadcast should rather tone down the description of what happens at Somnath and not make it appear in any way that it is a governmental function.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

2. N.V. Gadgil and K.M. Munshi.

15. Ceremony at Somnath Temple¹

I have been much distressed at the association of the Government of India with the ceremony that is taking place at Somnath. I wrote to the Jam Saheb and to the Government of Saurashtra about it.² I find now that in fact some Ministries of the Government of India, including our Ministry, had been consulted and in fact they encouraged various steps that were taken. I am afraid we can do nothing further in the matter now. But I think all this association is most unfortunate.

1. Note to S. Dutt, Secretary, MEA, 9 May 1951. JN Collection.

2. See *ante*, pp. 609–610.

10

MISCELLANEOUS

III. Vinoba Bhave and Land Redistribution

1. To N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar¹

New Delhi
May 2, 1951

My dear Gopalaswami,

You have, no doubt, been receiving information about Vinoba Bhave's tour in the Telengana districts of Hyderabad. I have received a number of reports and all demonstrate that his visit has done a remarkable effect on the people there. This does show how we can overcome evil if we adopt right methods. I hope Vinoba stays there longer and that the State authorities are giving him every assistance.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.

2. To M.K. Vellodi¹

New Delhi
May 15, 1951

My dear Vellodi,²

I am enclosing a letter addressed to Shri Vinoba Bhave. Will you please see to it that it reaches him.

I have had many accounts of Vinoba Bhave's activities in Hyderabad and in the Telengana area. All these accounts are agreed in emphasising the good influence that he has exercised. Indeed, his approach appears to have been singularly successful. I am, therefore, suggesting to him to remain there as long as he conveniently can.

I hope that your Government will give him every assistance.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Collection.
2. Vellodi was the Chief Minister of Hyderabad.

10

MISCELLANEOUS

IV. General

1. The Spirit of the Asian Games¹

The Asian Relations Conference held in Delhi three years ago gave me a feeling of exhilaration.² On seeing athletes gathered from several Asian nations I again feel that sense of exhilaration.

India's relations with her neighbours, especially in the East, go back literally to thousands of years. But in the eighteenth century came a break when the countries of the West, which had developed much more than India and other Asian nations, established colonial regimes there. Asia as a whole began to play, practically speaking, no part in world affairs. The countries of Asia, therefore, lost touch and contact with each other. India lost touch with her next-door neighbours which is an extraordinary thing. We lost direct contact with each other as countries and also as individuals. Now in the course of the last few years we have been regaining those contacts. Of course the major reason for that is the disappearance of colonialism from several countries of Asia. There are of course other reasons also, for instance, the development of the airways in Asia.

So these various processes have been going on and sometimes one feels as if there was a turning point in the historical process and that the last two hundred years or so of colonialism having ended, we are picking up old threads again, not in the same way of course, because the world has changed and is changing and other countries have changed, but nevertheless picking up old threads again. We feel more about our neighbours, we meet them much more, we consider how far we have common ideals and how far we can cooperate. So gradually and slowly we develop not exactly a common policy but nevertheless an attempt at cooperative working which is all to the good.

I am mentioning all this because I am interested in history and the working of historic forces. It helps me to get myself rid of the burden of the present. When I think of the present in this long perspective, it becomes less burdensome, it becomes just a page in an unending story which started long ago and which undoubtedly will go on for long years to come.

The countries of Asia should renew the old contacts more and more. It is good that they meet each other and know each other more fully. The countries of Asia are today thinking more and more of each other because it is natural for us to do so, being neighbours. It is also good from another point of view and not directly perhaps but indirectly. It will strengthen those forces of

1. Inaugural speech at the First Asian Games Federation Congress, New Delhi, 2 March 1951. From the *National Herald*, 3 March 1951.
2. The Asian Relations Conference was held from 23 March to 2 April 1947.

international cooperation which ultimately must be the basis of a secure peace. In these days, there is much conflict and tension and talk of disaster in the world; it is desirable to strengthen all such forces which tend to lessen that tension and promote goodwill and understanding.

Asian nations should not harp too much on their past achievements. They can, of course, be proud of their past glory but nothing is more dangerous than living on the past. Hardly any country in Asia can be said to be economically or militarily very strong compared to the highly industrialised and developed countries of the world. But we have nevertheless very great potential strength, provided we utilize it for the good of our countries and the world. It is possible, indeed, I feel sure, it is desirable that the larger the measure of cooperation between us the better.

This does not mean that Asian countries should cooperate with each other in any hostile sense to other countries of Europe or America. But cooperation among them is desirable because they are neighbours. Asian Games will give an opportunity to the young men and women of India to know of the high standard of sports in other countries.

India is proud to have foreign athletes here, and I extend them a welcome on behalf of the Government of India. I feel sorry that China cannot participate in the Games as Chinese athletes cannot come in the short time available. Some observers are coming from China, and India will welcome them. I hope that Chinese athletes will be able to participate in the next Asian Games.

Very probably many of the countries whose representatives are participating in the Games are more advanced than Indian athletes. If that is so, we would be jealous of you. If we are defeated, we should try to defeat you next time. It is in that spirit that these Games will be played.

There is no real victory or defeat of the spirit. Today I want in Asia, not only in the realm of sports but in every realm, an unconquerable spirit to be developed in every man.

2. Government and their Critics¹

We who are connected with Government have to put up with a great deal of criticism and condemnation in all kinds of language, decent and indecent. As

1. Speech at the opening of the Bombay Government's Aarey Milk Colony, Bombay, 4 March 1951. From *The Hindustan Times*, 5 March 1951 and *The Bombay Chronicle* and the *National Herald*, 6 March 1951.

a democrat, I do not mind honest criticism. I am absolutely convinced that for the growth of a democratic society criticisms should not only be allowed but should be actually encouraged. But criticism, to be effective and useful, should be constructive and not destructive. I am pained to find that criticism in India today is far more destructive than constructive, far more saying nay, nay, than saying yes; far more saying that everything is wrong, but too little telling us what should be done.

I do not expect any idealistic formulae from my critics. It is not, however, too much for me to expect from them a realistic approach to the problems—some constructive suggestions as to what should actually be done. I do not mean that some idealistic formula should be given to us. In this complicated modern world, it is no use being advised continuously to work for the betterment of the people and to think in terms of high principles. We accept these principles at their face value. But how can they be put into action? They say, work for the betterment of India. I accept it. Socialize the country and nationalize industries, they say. How are we to do it? But we have to think in terms of producing positive schemes which are practical. Criticism must be related to the work that we have to do today, tomorrow, or the day after.

In the old agitational days, passing resolutions, which gave directions to men's minds was important. But even now, some think that by passing legislation, India can be made better. Of course, any Government nowadays has to pass a great deal of legislation to put an end to evils and to create opportunities for progressive work. After all, legislation merely removes obstacles and shows the way to the people to do constructive work. I am at a loss to understand the attitude of those who believe that legislation is sufficient for improving the conditions in the country. At the most, there is an idea that legislation by itself can help in removing the obstacles that lie in the way, or showing the right path that they have to traverse. Nothing of the kind. Everyone shouts for having things done that he wants by some decree or law, not realizing that no constructive work can be done by legislation alone. Perhaps destructive work can be done by that. For legislation to be successful, it is to be backed by constructive efforts which include activities of the human mind, hands and limbs.

I have faith in socialism and the socialistic way of life. Mere belief in itself is not enough, and those who criticise the Government do not seem to have anything to suggest to bring about this consummation. I believe in socialism, but nothing amazes me so much as the talk of the socialists. "Let us socialize, nationalize the industries", they say. Some of them are my friends whom I respect. I do believe in socialism. But when they talk about this, they talk through their hats. In the last four years, I have been wrestling with intricate problems. I have some intelligence, I must say in all humility. I am

not a fool, but I think that I have more intelligence than the normal human being.

If I was told that I have failed or my Government have failed, we shall be condemned. I am repeatedly told that my Government has failed. I may admit this failure. I may also admit that failure cannot be condoned. Yet it is necessary to understand the conditions prevailing in the country at present—conditions which are responsible for our failure. I cannot prophecy the future, but I feel that difficult days are ahead of us and we are faced with many difficult problems.

I am amazed to hear loose talk about the war and the criticism that has been made about my peace efforts. Why is it that there is a tremendous upset in the world? Why do people say that I talk frequently of peace? I see in this country, as also elsewhere, there is talk of war, which means, for any intelligent man, destruction. Some say when I am talking of peace, I am talking through my hat. That shows lack of intelligence and lack of purpose in human society and in doing things. Do they who make adverse criticism about my peace efforts realise that absence of peace means war and war would mean destruction of the world and of the future for which we have all been working?

My main strength does not depend on my intelligence, nor in my physical stamina which is considerable. It depends mainly on one thing. I care tuppence as to what happens to me today or tomorrow. I am not frightened by anything anywhere. I do not mind if I am not the Prime Minister tomorrow. This does not mean I will retire to the Himalayas and stop taking active part in the country's affairs. I shall rather continue to do work according to my capacity, to achieve the objective I have in mind. I shall work and fight till the end of my life. In doing so, I shall throw my entire strength, both physical and mental into it. If I am out, I shall put up a better and more active fight for the nation, not bound by precedents, protocols and burdens of office. Perhaps, free from the restrictions of office, protocol and what not, I may be able to work better.

Difficult days are ahead and I appeal to you to divert your energies to constructive work. Try to understand the country's problems in a constructive spirit. The country's advancement can be promoted only by hard work and nothing but hard work. Work anyhow, by hand or machine, and produce. This must be realized by all.

The world is in turmoil; nobody can see what the future may bring. But some persons think that they can perform wonders by some sort of magic. One has to give them time because most people tend to function that way. But some at least should not think that way and must be practical. Magic would not prevent wars or bring about peace. We have to be constructive.

I cannot prophesy the future. I can only form a picture. I have an ideal, an objective before me. I shall throw my entire strength into it.

Constructive work is important for the country today. The work of the Bombay Government in establishing the milk colony at Aarey is a piece of constructive effort. India is very poorly served in milk. The condition of India's cattle is very bad compared to any acceptable standards, but the false notions about the preservation of the cow in the country are ridiculous.

Much superstition has been applied and religion misplaced in respect of the cow. Religion prevailing in this country is something stupendous. The surest way to kill the cow is to worship it.

It is about time that people woke up and thought about it. The way in which it is affecting us is surprising, shocking particularly from the point of view of raising the health of the nation, especially of the children. It is time people realize that for improving the health of the people in general and of children in particular, it is essential that cattle should be carefully looked after and good milk provided. A section of the people talk glibly of legislation to prohibit cow-slaughter.

People say that we should bring in legislation prohibiting cow-slaughter.² They imagine that by negative action milk supply would increase. They do not realize that the result would be an increase in the vast number of diseased and weak cattle. It is no good approaching problems sentimentally and getting excited. The question should be tackled on a rational basis. They should think constructively and find out what is wrong with us. If there is not enough milk in the country, it is better that adults should be forbidden to drink it rather than that their children should be deprived of their full quota.

What is needed at this hour is constructive work, and the kind of fighting spirit which was evident in the Punjab. When locusts invaded the Punjab recently, there was literally a conscription. Schools, colleges and other institutions were closed and all available manpower was directed to tackle the locust invasion. Because they approached the question in this fighting spirit and concentrated all their energy on this they survived. Otherwise, locusts would have destroyed harvests not only of this year, but also the next by laying their eggs.

It is regrettable that while this was being done in the Punjab, there was a section of the people in some other part of the country who thought that the locusts and locust eggs should be protected because they contained life. They believed that life should not be destroyed. This was indeed a ridiculous position to take.

2. The Hindu Mahasabha, meeting at Pune on 24 December 1950, resolved that the Government should ban cow-slaughter as India was mainly an agricultural country and cow-killing was harmful to the country not only from the point of view of religion but for economic reasons also.

How long are we going to put up with this stupidity? Such sentimentalism comes in the way of the nation's progress. How are we going to make people understand that this mentality is the very negation of the humanitarian mentality.

3. To all Ministers¹

New Delhi
March 20, 1951

My dear

I should like to draw the attention of all Ministers to the embarrassment caused to us frequently by large-scale invitations issued on behalf of some organisation to foreigners of note to visit India, without any reference to the External Affairs Ministry. Many of these guests would be welcome in India and for some of them we would have to make special arrangements if they came. Some others would not be so welcome and yet some might not be considered desirable guests and we would hesitate to issue visas to them. In any event, any large influx of foreign guests needs a good deal of preparation from the Government point of view. It is, therefore, very necessary that no conference should be organised in India to which foreign guests are invited without reference to External Affairs. We have no desire to come in the way. Our only wish is to avoid embarrassments to us and to others.

It is specially important that Ministers should not associate themselves with such conferences without due enquiry and consultation, as otherwise an impression is created that the conference is under official or semi-official auspices, and our responsibility becomes all the greater. The people invited are misled and, when they arrive here, they may be dissatisfied with the arrangements made or the treatment accorded to them.

A recent instance of this is "The Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom".² I knew nothing about this and had no idea of what it was. I did not know who had been invited to it. No reference whatever was made either to me or to External Affairs. It is only in the last day or two that I have discovered that the list of foreign delegates to this Congress is a very long and comprehensive one including Prime Minister Attlee, Mrs Roosevelt and about a hundred eminent politicians, writers and others from all over the world. Of course, most of these have probably refused. But some well-known persons have come or are coming. Meanwhile, we have had to indicate that no such

1. K. Santhanam Collection, NAI.

2. The Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom was held in Bombay from 28 to 31 March 1951.

Congress should be held in Delhi.³ This itself must be embarrassing to the guests who have come. Altogether, the whole episode exhibits a total lack of cooperation amongst us.

Two Cabinet Ministers associated themselves with this Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom. They had every right to do so. But in the circumstances this has proved very embarrassing and people abroad as well as in India have got an impression of some kind of Government association with this Congress.

I am venturing to write this to my colleagues because I feel that it is desirable to exercise some caution in such matters.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The venue of the Congress had been shifted from Delhi to Bombay.

4. To Bhabanath Datta¹

New Delhi
March 23, 1951

Dear Friend,

Your letter of the 20th March.² I can hardly discuss with you in a letter large problems of policy. If you think that my Government represents and protects the banker class, then all I can say is that I do not agree with you.

You refer to my statement that a President should be provided for and then quote from my old book, *Soviet Russia*. As a matter of fact, since I wrote that book, very great changes have taken place in Russia itself. These changes are both for the good, and what I consider, also for the bad. The old equality that was aimed at is not so obvious now. Even salaries are of various grades. But apart from salaries, there are innumerable other advantages which high officials have and which the common people do not have.

Why you or anyone should object to our providing a very modest salary for an ex-President, I cannot imagine. The pomp that surrounds the head of the State and the ceremonials in Soviet Russia are far greater than anything that we have here. Even their Ambassadors live in much greater style than

1. JN Collection.

2. Datta wrote that while the banker class was flourishing and dominating, the masses were being neglected. He referred to one of Nehru's statements in Parliament and quoted from his book, *Soviet Russia*, to point out that there did not exist such difference in the salaries of the officials and the masses in Russia as existed in India. He added that it was not necessary to provide for ex-Presidents in India.

our Ambassadors. We have provided a little over Rs 1000/- a month for our ex-Presidents. This Rs 1000/-, after income-tax is taken off, is much less. Owing to inflation, roughly Rs 3/- now represent what one rupee did fifteen or twenty years ago. In fact this pension now would amount to something considerably less than Rs 500/- a month, probably about Rs 300/-. I doubt if any country deals with its heads of States in such a modest manner.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

New Delhi
March 26, 1951

Nan dear,

... The growing feeling among certain circles in America towards India is obvious. There is nothing to be done about it except not to get excited and generally take things calmly. One has to speak sometimes both privately and publicly, but it is desirable to avoid public argument. When one side starts talking in a very loud voice, the best way is to tone down one's own voice rather than trying to rival the other party. Anyway that is the right thing to do. I try to adhere to that policy, though not always with success....

With love from
Jawahar

1. JN Collection. Extracts.

6. Law and Social Change¹

There should not be any lag between the development of law and the needs of changing society. There should be the closest possible cooperation between

1. Speech at the annual conference of the Indian Branch of the International Law Association, New Delhi, 31 March 1951. From *The Hindustan Times* and the *National Herald*, 1 April 1951.

jurists and economists or politicians whose object is to study the changing social fabric.

In various capacities I have been connected with law. To some extent as a practising junior lawyer, to some extent as participating in law-making but to a considerable extent as an accused before law. I have had no experience of functioning as a judge and sitting on this bench today, therefore, in a different capacity I feel some of the atmosphere which presumably surrounds this bench.

You have referred to various aspects of international law and various problems that confront us today.² As a matter of fact, while it is right and proper that international law should as far as possible be brought into some kind of shape, I may not be wrong in saying that in the ultimate analysis there is no international law. There is an attempt to reach some kind of an agreement, but ultimately international law, or for that matter any law, becomes something in the nature of sanctions imposed by some superior power or some group having greater strength. I, however, think, it is proper that international law should, as far as possible, be brought into some kind of shape.

There is another great difficulty. That is that law by itself in the very nature of things appears to be a growth by precedent. In a changing society, precedent, though always offering something from which we can learn, may also prevent that adaptation of law to the functioning of the changing society which is necessary in order not to have a break or conflict. It is curious to know how the mind of man sometimes lags behind in the face of changes. Looking back over the last few hundred years one finds how enormous social changes have taken place.

The point is that social changes, namely, changes in the fabric of society, whether in a group or in the world, have been so rapid that law is left behind because law is based on precedent largely. The principles governing some of them, though of permanent application, many of them are not and if they are to be kept in harmony with the social group they should continue to be adapted to the needs of that social group.

2. Harilal Kania, who presided over the meeting, said that the fundamental objects of the association consisted of the elimination of war and the attainment of the four freedoms incorporated in the Atlantic Charter which also formed the basis of the United Nations Organisation. The achievements of science had however made problems of international law more acute. As a result, most nations had started preparing themselves in advance for defence in the event of a sudden attack. This gave a new dimension to the question of aggression and defence.

7. Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial¹

This Bill is a short, simple and rather formal one; but behind those simple words lies a story, a story which is enshrined in India's history and which is embedded in our people's consciousness. Everyone here knows the full significance of that story. Some of us who are here—not many I think—have in a sense been, though not actual participants in this story, but witnesses from a distance and have in that sense actually taken part in it. And when I heard my friend Dr Tek Chand refer to those days,² to that fateful month of April, 32 years ago, many scenes came before my mind, and to a certain extent, I felt again that powerful emotion that came to us in that month of April long ago.

We know what happened then to the path of India's history. Many people think of it in terms just of "something happened and is past" and so it is. But nevertheless, it is something a little more than that. At any rate, those of us who lived in those days and who were naturally much younger than we are now and who experienced those vivid emotions and whose lives were powerfully affected by them, cannot think of it merely as a page of history. It is history no doubt, but it is history of the kind that marks the turning point in a nation's life. I think it is true to say that this event and the various other events that surrounded it, thirty-two years ago, were a very definite turning point in India's history, turning point in the lives not only of hundreds of thousands, but ultimately of millions of people, when we took a new path under the leadership of Gandhiji and pursued it, in varying degrees, till we achieved a large measure of success. Therefore, behind the formal words of this Bill, there is a great deal which is unsaid, but which is felt.

I have been connected with this memorial³ in some way or other from its earliest days as Dr Tek Chand has been connected, and I confess I feel rather ashamed of the way we, who were connected with it, have dealt with it during these long years, ashamed not of any wrong deed—nothing has happened—but of the delay in dealing with it in a proper way. Of course, the delay was perhaps no one's fault, because in the nature of things, nothing much could be done, and whenever we thought of doing something, another upheaval took place in the country in which we were involved. And this memorial itself was a standing testimony against the Government of the day and they could not and did not help. So there was this delay. Very largely the burden of giving

1. Statement in Parliament, 21 April 1951. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 1951, Vol XI, Part II, columns 7211-7213. Extracts.
2. Tek Chand had given a brief account of the incidents leading to General Dyer ordering the killing of two thousand innocent people, and wounding many more.
3. Nehru was one of the founder-trustees.

advice in regard to it fell on Mahatma Gandhi in the initial years. There were some others too, but for many years it was Mahatma Gandhi who did it. Later, after his death, mostly, it was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and I who had to shoulder this burden, though not a very heavy burden, because we were not doing very much, but merely seeing that no money was wasted or frittered away. And now, because of all this, we did not indulge in any schemes, in anything which might involve any large expenditure of money. We merely kept the pace going. And that is why, perhaps, the money we collected which was not a very large sum—under Rs ten lakhs, I believe, and a major part of it had gone in the purchase of the land—has been there, stored up as it were, these thirty years. And we have spent mostly only the interest, perhaps a little more here and there. And so we carried on in this way.

Originally there was some idea, I believe, in the original resolution of the Congress, that some kind of monument should be erected there, and some kind of fancy designs were produced; but nothing was done, partly because we did not have the time to do it, as we were otherwise engaged, and partly also because many of us began to think more and more that perhaps a monument would not be suitable, that the best way would be to leave it as it is; of course, not leave it as a wilderness, but nevertheless, leave it as it is and not put up any fancy monument or build any structures there. That is my personal opinion and I think, of many others also. And so now, all that this Bill is intended to do is to carry on in a formal way what has been done in an informal way, to make it something permanent and not dependent on one or two trustees to carry on....

I should like the House to remember also, that we have thought of this memorial first of all as a national memorial and not merely as a provincial one; and secondly not as a party memorial, although it so happens that a great party, namely, the Indian National Congress first issued the appeal for funds,⁴ first acquired it and to some extent has had some dealings in regard to its management, etc.⁵ But we do not think of it in terms of a party memorial. We have put in it as ex-officio trustee the President of the Indian National Congress because the Congress has been closely associated with this matter. We have not put him in with a view to convert it into a provincial or party memorial. That I would suggest to the House as an answer to a proposal that my honourable friend Mr Musafir⁶ was making, namely, to add some other persons like the provincial head of the Congress to this...

4. An appeal, drafted by Mahatma Gandhi on 27 December 1919, was issued for the acquisition of the site and the raising of rupees ten lakhs. The site was later purchased for rupees five lakhs sixty five thousand and eight hundred eighty seven.
5. The Congress had set up a board of trustees to formulate the broad policies and to see that the funds were not wasted.
6. Gurmukh Singh Musafir.

8. Ban on Cow-Slaughter¹

I want to make it perfectly clear that the Government has not yet accepted the report of the cattle protection committee.² May be that some officer of the Agriculture Ministry may have considered the report but it has never come before the Government as such.

However, the Government has dealt with the matter in some other connection and a comprehensive Bill has been prepared.³ It is my hope that this Bill may be introduced in Parliament in the current session.⁴ In this Bill it has not been possible to accept all that is in the resolution under discussion, because the approach of the Government towards the problem is "constructive" and not "prohibitive".

It is recognised that there is a strong sentiment in the country against cow-slaughter. That sentiment is to be respected. But it is strange that while the sentiment is there, the condition of cattle in India is possibly the worst in the world.

Moreover, India is a vast country and the problems in various regions are different. Naturally these problems need different solutions and there can be no one universal solution for the whole country.

In India we have to face the bigger task of protecting the people. Many people are under-fed and unemployed. Unless human beings are provided for, what is the use of protecting cattle? For if men fall, cattle cannot remain.

From that point of view, the discussion on the resolution should be adjourned as has been suggested by Pandit Pant.

1. Reply to debate, AICC meeting, New Delhi, 5 May 1951. From the *National Herald*, 6 May 1951.
2. On 5 May 1951, Babulal Tewari moved the resolution on cow-slaughter as recommended by the Cattle Preservation and Development Committee so that India's needs for increased production of milk and agricultural products were met.
3. The Bill on preservation of useful cattle was discussed in Parliament on 26 February 1951. The discussion was dominated by the insistence of some members on a ban on cow-slaughter chiefly on religious grounds.
4. The Go-Samvardhan Bill was moved in Parliament on 8 May 1951. It was referred to the Select Committee on 4 June 1951.

9. To Isobel Cripps¹

New Delhi
May 6, 1951

My dear Isobel,²

I have just received your letter of April 27th. I am writing to you immediately to tell you that I am making arrangements for mangoes to be sent to you from Bombay. I am not quite sure if they will reach you at Lausanne. I hope however that they will go soon and will reach you if not at Lausanne, then at Zurich. It gives us great pleasure to be able to send something which will be appreciated by Stafford. I shall try to send another parcel later.

I wonder if you know the fruit called *Leechee*. It is Chinese, but I believe the Indian variety is better. It is just in season here now and if it will at all be appreciated by Stafford, I will have it sent. Of course it does not compare with the mango. Unfortunately our mango crop this year is a bad one owing to weather conditions.

Stafford's illness has been causing all of us a great deal of anxiety. But patience is of course necessary. It is perfectly true, as you say, that face to face with illness one sometimes achieves a certain freedom of spirit. Between Stafford's patient and cooperative way and your loving care of him, I am sure everything is being done to help his recovery.

As suggested by you, I have shared your letter with Rajaji.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. JN Collection.
2. Wife of Sir Stafford Cripps. Cripps had resigned from the Labour Government and was lying ill in Switzerland.

10. Circular to Ministers of the Union Government¹

When some of us first came into the Government, in September 1946, we started a practice of meeting informally every afternoon. All Cabinet Members were supposed to attend, unless anyone of them was particularly occupied. We had no agenda and we generally discussed each other's problems. I found

1. New Delhi, 8 May 1951, H.K. Mahtab Papers, NMML.

these informal meetings very useful not only in the solution of some of our difficulties but also in bringing about a certain cohesion and cooperation in our work.

Gradually, after the Muslim League came in, this practice faded out. Since then it has not been revived, although occasionally we meet informally. I think that it would be good if we reverted to this practice to some extent. We meet fairly frequently in Cabinet and we are constantly meeting each other in various places. But we have seldom an opportunity for informal talk between all of us.

I suggest, therefore, that we might begin by meeting once a week. All the Members of the Cabinet as well as the Ministers of State might join this meeting. I would specially welcome the Ministers of State, as our chances of discussing anything with them are strictly limited to some formal occasions and they do not meet the Cabinet as a whole. We might have a first meeting of this kind on Sunday next, May 13th, at 5 p.m. in my house. I shall be glad if you will make it convenient to come and spend an hour or so with me then.

11. To David E. Lilienthal¹

New Delhi
May 9, 1951

My dear Mr Lilienthal,

It was a great pleasure to me to receive your letter of April 20th. The few days you spent with us will be remembered by me for a long time. I wish you could have stayed a little longer so that I could have the benefit of your ripe experience and wisdom.

As you know, we are struggling hard with a multitude of problems—some of them of our own making and some for which, perhaps, we are not responsible. In any event, the burden and responsibility are ours, and whatever measure of success we may achieve, I hope that we will not be lacking in an earnest attempt to understand and solve these problems, both in our own country and in a wider sphere. I am seldom troubled by any difficulty, provided I am quite sure of the rightness of the step to be taken. With that assurance, one can function with some effectiveness, even though the results may not be as desired. It is really the problem of wrestling mentally, if I may say so, with

1. JN Collection.

these difficulties and trying to find assurance somewhere in this uncertain world, that oppresses one.

It is because talks with you helped one to think, that I specially welcomed your presence here. I am very glad that you liked your visit to India and that you found some evidence here of fortitude and imagination. The testimony from you heartens me. Living as I do in the midst of important problems, it is not easy for me to see them in proper perspective.

I am sorry to learn of the death of your father.²

With all good wishes,

I am,
Very sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Leo Lilienthal.

12. To C. Rajagopalachari¹

New Delhi
May 18, 1951

My dear Rajaji,

The enclosed two articles by G.D.H. Cole² in the *New Statesman*³ might interest you. It seems to me that, generally speaking, his analysis is correct. It does not wholly apply to India, but the principles do apply. We shall have to make some choice as to which way we go. It will not be possible to look and walk both ways, as we try to do most of the times with unfortunate results.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. JN Collection.
2. He was Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory, Oxford, at this time.
3. In his article "Shall Socialism Fail" published in two parts in *New Statesman and Nation* on 5 and 12 May 1951, Cole attributed the failure of the Labour Party in England to its trying, unlike the Communists when in power, to improve material conditions from above without changing the social structure. He added that for the Socialists' success it was absolutely necessary that new springs of energy from among the people should be released with a new leadership which would lead by setting an example and not rule by authority delegated from above.

13. To Rajendra Prasad¹

New Delhi
May 23, 1951

My dear Mr President,

You were good enough to write to me on May 17, about the proposal of the Hind Kisan Panchayat and the Hind Mazdoor Sabha to take out a procession on June 3 and proceed to Government House.² In my answer sent to you that day I told you that I would consult the Home Minister and then write to you again. I have now consulted the Home Minister and he has given consideration to the present rule obtaining in Delhi in regard to processions and meetings.

While there has been a certain regulation of processions and meetings and sometimes there has been a ban on them, at the present moment there is no such ban. Even when there was a ban on processions, no attempt was made physically to disperse unlawful processions. All that was done was to arrest a few ring leaders and prosecute them. The Chief Commissioner³ felt that although this was in a sense condoning a breach of the law, it was a better way to deal with the situation without creating any fuss in the Capital city.

This question is being examined by the Home Ministry. I think that a distinction should be made between banning processions generally, that is where permission for them is not obtained, and declaring certain limited areas as outside the scope of meetings and processions. Thus it seems to me improper for processions and meetings to be held in front of or very near Parliament House or Government House or the Central Secretariat at any time. This is an interference with the work of Parliament, etc. I would limit this area strictly and not make it a wide area.

Generally speaking, public meetings should be allowed elsewhere. As for processions elsewhere, this would largely depend on circumstances to be judged by the local authorities. This matter, as I have said above, is under consideration by the Home Ministry.⁴

I would suggest to you that an answer be sent on your behalf to the Socialist Party or to the Jana Vani Divas Samiti to the following effect:

It is not customary or desirable for processions to go to Government House. The President is above political parties and it is, therefore, not proper for any political organisation to take processions to Government House. If,

1. File No 16/2/51-Poll, MHA.
2. Rammanohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan leading a big procession gave a charter to the President on 3 June 1951 demanding abolition of zamindari, redistribution of land, reduction of the price-level and work for all.
3. Shankar Prasada.
4. A committee was constituted to look into the question of taking processions to the Government House.

however, any person wishes to present a representation to him, he or one or two others with him can come at a time fixed for the purpose to present that representation.

You would not, as President, say anything in regard to that representation except that it would be forwarded by you to the appropriate Ministry or Ministries.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To C. Rajagopalachari¹

New Delhi
May 31, 1951

My dear Rajaji,

Karanjia² of *Blitz* and D.D. Kosambi³ of the Tata Institute of Research wrote to me about the refusal of passports to them for going to Russia....

But I am not so sure of D.D. Kosambi. On reference to the Home Ministry, Iengar⁴ writes to say that the reason for not giving him a passport was that he was known to be friendly with P.C. Joshi⁵ and Adhikari⁶ and that he took a prominent part in the Warsaw Peace Congress⁷ as well as the Peace Congress at Bombay.⁸ Therefore you think that all this indicates that he has succumbed to the propaganda of international communism and his science has gone relatively to the background.

I think all this may be true, though science and communism need not necessarily be in conflict. I feel however that in cases like this, that is where a well-known scientist is openly sympathetic to communism, we should not

1. File No 52/8/51-Poll, MHA. Extracts.
2. R.K. Karanjia was the Editor-in-Chief of *Blitz* at this time.
3. Kosambi held the chair for mathematics at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, at this time. He also made significant contributions to an understanding of Indian history.
4. H.V.R. Iengar, the Home Secretary.
5. A prominent leader of the Communist Party of India.
6. G. Adhikari was a leader of the Communist Party of India since its formation.
7. The World Peace Congress, originally designed to have been held in Sheffield, was transferred to Warsaw after several hundred foreign delegates had been refused visas for Britain. The Congress met in Warsaw from 16 to 22 November 1950, and was attended by 1,756 delegates representing 80 countries.
8. The Congress for Peace was organised as part of the World Peace Movement launched in 1948 by the Council of World Peace. On 28 February, the Indian Government informed the secretary of the Congress that participation of the foreign delegates in the Congress would not be allowed and the venue of the Congress must also be changed. The Congress was later held in Bombay in May 1951.

come in the way of his travel abroad. From the purely practical point of view, his going abroad cannot harm us, while our preventing him from going abroad might well harm us. I do not myself see any advantage in preventing such persons from going abroad. It is not as if we add very much to the contacts existing because there are plenty of contacts.

Kosambi's passport has been impounded by the Bombay Government, which means that he cannot go abroad at all to any country. He is a noted scientist among our younger people and I do not think this will create a good impression at all here or abroad.

I wish you would consider this matter again.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

15. Intelligence Reports¹

...I have come across repeated cases of Intelligence reports about persons I have known intimately for a score of years or more.² The conclusions arrived at in such reports were often, to my knowledge, manifestly wrong. That was not the fault of our Intelligence but was due to a certain approach to which they had been trained in old times, but which was not wholly applicable today. It does not often happen that an Intelligence Officer, however good for his work, has political flair or an understanding of basic events....³

1. Note to Home Minister, 1 June 1951. JN Collection. Extracts.
2. C. Rajagopalachari asked Nehru to advise whether they must or must not expect that "foreign nationals do not establish political contacts with groups engaged in violent and subversive activities against Government."
3. Nehru made these remarks following an adverse report by the Intelligence Department on the activities of a Russian national in Bombay.

16. To V.K. Krishna Menon¹

New Delhi
June 5, 1951

My dear Krishna,

I returned from Kashmir at midday today after two days there.² These two days were exceedingly strenuous and I have returned tired instead of refreshed.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML.
2. Nehru stayed in Kashmir on 3 and 4 June 1951.

For sometime past, I have been feeling very stale and tired. I have become nervy, which is a bad thing. If I cannot stop myself from further deterioration in this respect, I shall think of leaving off all work for sometime. Perhaps the strain would be a little less after Parliament is prorogued.

All the news I have received about you from a variety of sources, including your own letters, goes to show that you continue to be very ill and sometimes are completely bed-ridden. You may of course carry on by sheer will-power, but it is clear to me that you must not continue any work till your health is in better condition. I am quite sure that I would not continue my work, if I felt unwell. There is no chance, as far as I can see, of your recovering health so long as you go on at this pace.

It seems to me therefore quite necessary that you should give yourself long rest and have yourself properly treated. I would suggest that you should take three months' leave, or a somewhat shorter period if necessary, and forget about India House. It is quite possible that in your absence some mistakes might be made or some things might be done in a wrong way. That cannot be helped and we have to take the risk. To go on working, in your present state of health, seems to me completely wrong. It is worse still to work during brief spells when you are feeling a little better. That does not give you the slightest chance of recovery and it is hardly fair on the work.

I therefore suggest that you might take three months' leave or you can make it two months and see how you feel like later. For this period you can make such arrangements for India House as you think proper.

I know that important issues are at stake and no one knows that some major crisis might not confront us. Even so, I think that we should not delay your rest and treatment. Crises will continue to pursue us and it is better that you should come back after a spell and deal with them then.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

17. To V.K. Krishna Menon¹

New Delhi
June 15, 1951

My dear Krishna,

I wrote to you some days ago suggesting to you that you should take three months leave and take rest and treatment. I am quite sure that it is not right

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML.

for you, in your present state of health, to continue working hard. I know well that your absence from India House for a while will create difficulties for us. But there are certain rules about health which must be followed and I am convinced that it will be the right course for you to take this leave.

I am going to Nepal tomorrow and then to Bihar. I am likely to be absent from Delhi a good deal during the next month.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

18. To the Children of Berlin¹

New Delhi
June 24, 1951

Dear Children,

Some time ago I received a request on your behalf to send you an elephant from India.² Any request made by the children has to be attended to and it gave me pleasure to find out a suitable elephant which we could send you. We found one in the forests of Malabar in South India and the name of this elephant is "Dhatri".³

Now Dhatri has gone to Germany to meet and make friends with the children of Berlin. Dhatri is a gift to you from the children of India and it carries the affection and good wishes of India's children for you.

An elephant is one of our biggest and strongest animals and yet, for us, it is a symbol of peace. It is gentle and intelligent and the smallest child can play with it.

I hope that Dhatri will find a good home in the Zoological Garden of Berlin. I hope also that Dhatri will often make you think of the country from which it comes and of the children of India, who send you this messenger of goodwill.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No 2(504)/49-PMS.

2. About fifty children of Berlin had written to Nehru a year earlier asking him to get an elephant from India for their zoo, which had been badly depleted by the War.

3. In a ceremony attended by the Mayor of Berlin, the elephant was named "Dhatri Shanti" (mother of peace).

19. To C. Rajagopalachari¹

New Delhi

June 25, 1951

My dear Rajaji,

I find that there is often a difference of opinion between the Home Ministry and the Ministry of External Affairs in regard to the issue of passports or visas. I think it would be desirable if some common formula or approach was devised to such questions. There may be border-line cases which require special consideration.

Two or three days ago a case was brought to my notice of an ex-member of the British House of Commons who applied for a passport to India. Home Ministry recommended that he should not be given a passport on the analogy of a previous case, that of Crowther,² a scientist. The charge against both was that they had associated themselves with Peace Congress in England or Warsaw. A further charge against the ex-MP (I think his name is Platts-Mills³ or some such thing) was that he had also associated himself with a representation about the Telengana accused. Further that these people were sympathetic to communist activities.

The case of Crowther did not come up before me and I have not even read it now. I should have issued the passport to him as, I think, a passport should be issued to Platts-Mills. There are any number of Labour MPs in England and others who would fall into this category. There are also some Conservatives who have equally associated themselves with Peace Congress and the like. Many of these persons are personally known to me. I find it very embarrassing to refuse visas, on the basis of vague police reports, to persons who are distinguished in public affairs and who happen to associate themselves with some of the movements mentioned above. Many of them were associated with the Indian independence movement.

When a Peace Congress was going to be held in India, we decided that we should not encourage foreigners to attend it. That was a special occasion and if we allowed one person to come, it would have been difficult to refuse others because of their past association with the Peace Congress. We know that the Peace Congress is communist inspired, but there is no doubt that non-Communists also have joined it. We should not, I think, make that a valid objection to the entry into India. In Europe such objections are not raised.

1. JN Collection.

2. James Gerald Crowther (1899-1983); Director, Science Department, British Council, 1941-46; correspondent, *Manchester Guardian*, 1928-48; author of *The Social Relations of Science*, (1941) and other works.

3. John Platts-Mills (b. 1906); MP (Labour), Finsbury, 1945-48; expelled from Labour Party, May 1948.

The only test seems to me that a particular individual is likely to be dangerous. Views or expression of views is not enough, more specially in regard to a peace effort, whatever the inner motives might be.

The other day, there was a case of a Bengali who wanted a passport. The police report, a long one, laid stress on his associating himself with Peace Congresses and the like. As a matter of fact, Dutt,⁴ who knew him, said that he was completely inoffensive and Dr B.C. Roy actually recommended that he should be given a passport. This shows us the danger of relying on police reports. I think, therefore, that our policy in regard to passports and visas should be a liberal one and only for special reasons should they be denied. Otherwise, the slight advantage we might gain is very much counter-balanced by the discredit that comes to us.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

4. S. Dutt, the Commonwealth Secretary.

20. Mahatma Gandhi and Jamnalal Bajaj¹

The year 1919 saw the beginnings of a new epoch in India's long history. Gandhiji was a well-known figure in India, and even to some extent abroad, before that year. But in 1919 he came on this vast scene of India as a blazing star gathering round himself not only the homage of the multitude, but also the devotion of a curious assemblage of human beings.

We were an odd assortment, very different from each other; different in our backgrounds, ways of life and ways of thinking, but there must have been some common feature in us to attract us towards that amazing personality.

Among those who came to Gandhiji then and became one of the select who were intimate with him was Jamnalal Bajaj.² I think I met him first at the Congress session of 1920. In the common companionship of those who were associated with the national movement under Gandhiji's leadership, we met often and grew to know each other fairly intimately. We were very different from one another and it is possible that, in other circumstances,

1. Foreword to a book *To a Gandhian Capitalist* by Kaka Kalelkar, 26 June 1951.
2. Jamnalal Bajaj was Treasurer of the Congress for many years and a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi.

there might have been no occasion for that intimacy to grow. But, I suppose, we recognised some worth in each other and the bond of mutual respect and affection grew progressively stronger. Certainly my respect for him became great and my affection for him made me look upon him almost as a member of an intimate family circle. In spite of our different ways of thinking, I went to him often for his advice in personal as well as public matters, because I realised that he was a man of integrity of purpose and sound commonsense.

And so we both grew in the service of a common cause, with a leader to whom both of us looked up, from our different viewpoints, as a great and magnificent personality. The great movement which we served had innumerable facets and all kinds of people were drawn to it. There were the great masses of Indian humanity; there were intellectuals and socialists, the zamindars and the tenants, the industrialists and the workers, the merchants and the artisans—a remarkable assortment. All of us contributed in small or great measure to that all-embracing movement. I think it would be true to say that Jamnalalji brought to it a special and rare quality. Most of us were like others and could perhaps be spared, for others could take their place. But Jamnalalji was rather unique in his own way, for many of his kind did not come into the movement with that devotion which he brought to it and so we valued him all the more and his absolute integrity and honesty of purpose endeared him to us.

It was a great blow to all of us when he left us in the prime of life.³ There was no one to take his place. I am glad that this collection of letters is being published,⁴ because it brings out somewhat what Jamnalalji was and it gives us some insight also into one of the innumerable aspects of Gandhiji's life and activities.

3. Jamnalal Bajaj died on 11 February 1942, when he was fifty-two.

4. Published by Jamnalal Bajaj Seva Trust, Wardha, in eight volumes under the title *Patra Vyavhar* between 1958-1969.

21. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit¹

New Delhi
June 29, 1951

Nan dear,

I am at Pahalgam at present. I arrived in Kashmir on the 26th and came straight to Pahalgam. The next morning I left for Chandanwari and Sheshnag. I returned this evening after three days' outing. This was the first outing of

1. JN Collection.

this kind I had had since, I think, 1945 when I came to Kashmir almost immediately after my release from Ahmednagar. Since then I am six years older and I was not sure in my mind how I would react to a heavy day's trekking on high altitudes. We did not go very high, but still we went a little over 14,000 feet. I was pleased to find that I reacted well. Naturally, I was a little tired and it was heavy work going up snow fields at that altitude. I panted and rested every short while. But I was surprised to find how soon I recovered from any fatigue. Now after three days I feel just fit for any amount of trekking. But there is going to be no more of it at present at least and for some time.

I enjoyed these three days very much. I went with a small party, just a Secretary and Hari,² apart from some Kashmir State officials to look after me. Indu and Feroz stayed behind at Pahalgam with the children. I was quite cut off from the outside world. Some of our party suffered from headache at that altitude. I had no such trouble. Today we came back from Sheshnag to Pahalgam, a matter of twenty miles, fairly hard going. This was done partly riding and partly walking. I feel quite fit and fresh after this day's work.

If I had another day, I might have gone on to Amarnath. It was only ten miles away from where we were. But I did not have another day to spare and the way to Amarnath at this time of the year was difficult. But my visit to Sheshnag lake was indeed worthwhile. It was a lovely sight, one of the most magnificent I have seen. The whole place was covered with snow and the lake itself was frozen over, except at the borders. We were lucky in having cloudless day and the sun was hot. Indeed the heat of the sun was rapidly melting snow and the Sheshnag river even in the course of the last two or three days has swollen up greatly.

I have another three days here and these three days will be rather full of work and preparation for the AICC meeting in Bangalore, not to mention Dr Graham's visit. This latter is not going to add to our general happiness. People here in Kashmir are dead set against him and I do not blame them at all. Of course, this is not a personal matter.

On my return here, I was surprised to receive a note from Betty³ from Srinagar. She only returned from Kashmir a few days ago. She writes to me to say that she has hurried back because she has got an assignment from some American and French newspapers to write about Kashmir. Evidently, she is asked to write on the political aspect.

I am going down to Delhi on the 4th July. Indu and Feroz will accompany me down, the children will remain here. Betty will also go down with me, presumably having finished her assignment or having collected enough data for it.

2. Personal attendant.

3. Krishna Hutheesing.

Your letter dated 18th June reached me this evening on my return to Pahalgam. The elections will be held here from the 15th November to early in January. That is different States will have different dates. These dates have not been finally fixed yet. I would love to have you here then or at any time. As a matter of fact, I am by no means clear in my mind of my own role during the elections. I have a distaste for elections of this type and after all that has happened. But I cannot run away from responsibility and gradually, in spite of many people, almost everybody in the Congress looks up at me to do some magic trick. I feel very far from being a magician. Much will depend upon the outcome of the AICC meeting. Probably there will be a full session of the Congress some time in September.

There is thus plenty of time for you to decide about your future programme. I shall keep you informed of course.

I have become a butt of all kind of attacks from all manner of people. The latest are the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference.⁴

With love from
Jawahar

4. At the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference which met at Bombay on 23 June 1951, Deshbandhu Gupta urged the Press of India to take steps for protecting the freedom of speech and expression of the individual as well as the Press which had been curtailed by the Amendment to Article 19(a) of the Constitution. The Government of India, he thought, was "determined to ignore the Press and take its own decisions" from the very beginning of the "sorry episode relating to the amendment of the Indian Constitution."

22. Mahatma¹

Nearly three and a half years have gone by since Gandhiji passed away. The manner of his death was the culmination and perfect climax to an astonishing career. Even during his life innumerable stories and legends had grown around him, and now he seems almost a legendary figure, one in the great line of India's sages and heroes and wise men. A new generation grows up to whom he is almost a name, a great name to be revered, but nevertheless a name. Within a few more years there will not be many left who have come in personal contact with him and had experience of that vivid, virile and magnificent personality. The legend will grow and take many shapes, sometimes

1. Foreword, 30 June 1951, to D.G. Tendulkar's book, *Mahatma*, in eight volumes (The Publications Division, Government of India, August 1951).

with little truth in it. Succeeding generations will remember him and pay honour to him. As is India's way, we shall add him to our pantheon and celebrate the day of his birth and the day of his passing away. We shall shout *Jai* when his name is mentioned and perhaps feel a little elated in the process and that we have done our duty to him.

What gods there are, I know not and am not concerned about them. But there are certain rare qualities which raise a man above the common herd and appear to make him as made of different clay. The long story of humanity can be considered from many points of view; it is a story of the advance and growth of man and the spirit of man, it is also a story full of agony and tragedy. It is a story of masses of men and women in ferment and in movement, and it is also the story of great and outstanding personalities who have given content and shape to that movement of masses.

In that story Gandhi occupies and will occupy a pre-eminent place. We are too near him to judge him correctly. Some of us came into intimate contact with him and were influenced by that dominating and very lovable personality. We miss him terribly now for he had become a part of our own lives. With us the personal factor is so strong that it comes in the way of a correct appraisal. Others, who did not know him so intimately, cannot perhaps have full realisation of the living fire that was in this man of peace and humility. So both these groups lack proper perspective or knowledge. Whether that perspective will come in later years when the problems and conflicts of today are matters for the historian, I do not know. But I have no doubt that in the distant, as in the near future, this towering personality will stand out and compel homage. It may be that the message which he embodied will be understood and acted upon more in later years than it is today. That message was not confined to a particular country or a community. Whatever truth there was in it was a truth applicable to all countries and to humanity as a whole. He may have stressed certain aspects of it in relation to the India of his day, and those particular aspects may cease to have much significance as times and conditions change. The kernel of that message was, however, not confined to time or space. And if this is so, then it will endure and grow in the understanding of man.

He brought freedom to India and in that process he taught us many things which were important for us at the moment. He told us to shed fear and hatred, and of unity and equality and brotherhood, and of raising those who had been suppressed, and of the dignity of labour and of the supremacy of things of the spirit. Above all, he spoke and wrote unceasingly of Truth in relation to all our activities. He repeated that Truth was to him God and God was Truth. Scholars may raise their eyebrows, and philosophers and cynics repeat the old question: what is Truth? Few of us dare to answer that question with any assurance and it may be that the answer itself is manysided and our

limited intelligence cannot grasp the whole. But, however limited the functioning of our minds may be or our capacity for intuition, each one of us must, I suppose, have some limited idea of truth, as he sees it. Will he act upto it, regardless of consequences, and not compromise with what he himself considers an aberration from it? Will he even in search of a right goal compromise with the means to attain it? Will he subordinate means to ends?

It is easy to frame this question, rather rhetorically, as if there was only one answer. But life is terribly complicated and the choices it offers are never simple. Perhaps, to some extent, an individual, leading his individual and rather isolated life, may endeavour with some success to answer that question for himself. But where he is concerned not only with his own actions but with those of many others, when fate or circumstance has put him in a position of moulding and directing others, what then is he to do? How is a leader of men to function? If he is a leader, he must lead and not merely follow the dictates of the crowd, though some modern conceptions of the functioning of democracy would lead one to think that he must bow down to the largest number. If he does so, then he is no leader and he cannot take others far along the right path of human progress. If he acts singly, according to his own lights, he cuts himself off from the very persons whom he is trying to lead. If he brings himself down to the same level of understanding as others, then he has lowered himself, been untrue to his own ideal, and compromised that truth. And once such compromises begin, there is no end to them and the path is slippery. What then is he to do? It is not enough for him to perceive truth or some aspect of it. He must succeed in making others perceive it also.

The average leader of men, especially in a democratic society, has continually to adapt himself to his environment and to choose what he considers the lesser evil. Some adaptation is inevitable. But as this process goes on, occasions arise when that adaptation imperils the basic ideal and objective. I suppose there is no clear answer to this question and each individual and each generation will have to find its own answer.

The amazing thing about Gandhi was that he adhered, in all its fullness, to his ideals, his conception of truth, and yet he did succeed in moulding and moving enormous masses of human beings. He was not inflexible. He was very much alive to the necessities of the moment, and he adapted himself to changing circumstances. But all these adaptations were about secondary matters. In regard to the basic things he was inflexible and firm as a rock. There was no compromise in him with what he considered evil. He moulded a whole generation and more and raised them above themselves, for the time being at least. That was a tremendous achievement.

Does that achievement endure? It brought results which undoubtedly endure. And yet it brings some reaction in its train also. For people, compelled by some circumstance, to raise themselves above their normal level, are apt to

sink back even to a lower level than previously. We see today something like that happening. We saw that reaction in the tragedy of Gandhi's own assassination. What is worse is the general lowering of standards, when Gandhi's whole life was devoted to the raising of these very standards. Perhaps this is a temporary phase and people will recover from it and find themselves again. I have no doubt that, deep in the consciousness of India, the basic teachings of Gandhi will endure and will affect our national life.

No man can write a real life of Gandhi, unless he is as big as Gandhi. So we can expect to have no real and fully adequate life of this man. Difficult as it is to write a life of Gandhi, this task becomes far more difficult because his life has become an intimate part of India's life for half a century or more. Yet it may be that if many attempt to write his life, they may succeed in throwing light on some aspects of this unique career and also give others some understanding of this memorable period of India's history.

Tendulkar² has laboured for many years over this book. He told me about it during Gandhiji's lifetime and I remember his consulting Gandhiji a few months before his death. Anyone can see that this work has involved great and devoted labour for many long years. It brings together more facts and data about Gandhi than any book that I know. It is immaterial whether we agree with any interpretation or opinion of the author. We are given here a mass of evidence and we can form our own opinions. Therefore, I consider this book to be of great value as a record not only of the life of a man supreme in his generation, but also of a period of India's history which has intrinsic importance of its own. We live today in a world torn with hatred and violence and fear and passion, and the shadow of war hangs heavily over us all. Gandhi told us to cast away our fear and passion and to keep away from hatred and violence. His voice may not be heard by many in the tumult and shouting of today, but it will have to be heard and understood some time or other, if this world is to survive in any civilised form.

People will write the life of Gandhi and they will discuss and criticize him and his theories and activities. But to some of us he will remain something apart from theory—a radiant and beloved figure who ennobled and gave some significance to our petty lives, and whose passing away has left us with a feeling of emptiness and loneliness. Many pictures rise in my mind of this man, whose eyes were often full of laughter and yet were pools of infinite sadness. But the picture that is dominant and most significant is as I saw him marching, staff in hand, to Dandi on the Salt March in 1930. Here was the pilgrim on his quest of Truth, quiet, peaceful, determined and fearless, who would continue that quest and pilgrimage, regardless of consequences.

2. Biographer and writer; well known for his biography of Mahatma Gandhi in eight volumes.

GLOSSARY

ashram	hermitage
Ayurveda	indigenous system of medicine
bhai	brother
Bharat Mata ki jai	victory to Mother India
dali	basket
gur	jaggery
holi	festival of spring
inam	reward
Jai Hind	victory to India
jihad	a holy war to defend Islam
ji	an affix denoting respect
jothedar	a title of a landholder
khandsari	unprocessed sugar
leechee	a kind of fruit
Maanpatra	an address (of welcome)
Mahatma Gandhi ki jai	victory to Mahatma Gandhi
padayatra	walking tour
rab	molasses
ryotwari	peasant proprietorship
Unani	indigenous system of medicine
vanaspati	hydrogenated vegetable oil

(Biographical footnotes in this volume and in volumes in the first series are italicized and those in the Second Series are given in block letters.)

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The four months covered in Part I of this volume, from 1 March to 30 June 1951, saw in foreign affairs an intensification of the Korean crisis and efforts by the United States to persuade other countries to sign a peace treaty with Japan on the lines of its own draft. The independent attitude of Nehru's Government on both issues offended opinion in the United States, and this was reflected in the reluctance to despatch foodgrains to India without restrictions to meet near-famine conditions, and in a refusal to appreciate India's viewpoint on Kashmir.

At home Nehru's main problem was differences with the President of the Congress, Purushottamdas Tandon. The proclaimed intent of several senior Congressmen to leave the party forced Nehru's hand and obliged him to bring matters to a head.

Nehru's correspondence with the President, Rajendra Prasad, on the inauguration of the Somnath temple shows his clear understanding of, and deep commitment to, secularism.

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